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Music & Its Masters

By

O. B. BOISE

WITH SIX PORTRAITS

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TO

GEORGE W. STOCKLEY, Esq.

Preface

I HAVE endeavored through showing the true nature of music, and the conditions that are essential to its growth in breadth and significance, to incite amateurs to a more respectful consideration of its claims.

O. B. B.

BERLIN, March 1, 1901.

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CHAPTER I

THE NATURE AND ORIGIN OF MUSIC

A GLANCE backward over the course of music's evolution suffices to show that, until in very recent times, it furnishes no pregnant data for the historian. The first era of music's evolution began before the advent of historic man, for the earliest races of whom we know anything had a well-defined appreciation of its significance, but no noteworthy landmarks appear until after music came in touch with modern culture; indeed, no great advancement is traceable until after the invention of notation. The first record of melodies produced is sup-

posed to have been made in the fourth century (A.D.),—viz., that of three Greek hymns,—to Apollo, Nemesis, and Calliope,—which, however, possess meagre means of proving their authenticity. From this shadowy period until harmonies enter the field, nearly a thousand years later, the historian finds no fruitful material, no verified accomplishments.

The march of material events was amply recorded, but melodies were passed from mouth to mouth and ear to ear, necessarily changing their outlines in the process, for the line that connects memory and expression seems, in most of humankind, to run so near that which leads from imagination to expression, as to engender inaccuracy in transmission. (This crossed-line influence is recognizable in the productions of most composers. Memories become entangled in their fancies.) Although our modern melody has doubtless come

down to us through long lines of heritage, yielding to the prevailing influences of each successive stage in transmission, there is no statistical light on its line of development.

It would be interesting to know in what form the first musical intuition manifested itself, and then to trace an unbroken chain of cause and effect from that first manifestation to date, but that knowledge would not materially benefit music, which is the only art whose career does not follow well-defined cycles,—the features of periods reproducing themselves with the recurrence of conditions.

In sculpture, poetry, and architecture we have seasons of reverting to the antique, and with good results. These arts dealt with tangible material, could be kept present to the eye and mind, and therefore developed quickly. We return to their ancient forms, so restful in their conformity to natural adjustment,

for relief from the tireless ingenuity of modern producers, and to find bases for new flights.

Music is, however, so essentially intangible that it required ages to discover sufficient of its underlying principles to afford the foundation for an art. Nothing within our ken has been as slow in evolving, and yet nothing has shown such an unwavering tendency forward and upward. These characteristics, and its insidious influence upon man's nature, entitle it to be called the divine art. It is in course of evolution from its original germ, but the outlines of its early technical forms have no significance for the nineteenth-century composer.

For the above reasons statistics will be avoided when they are not essential in locating and verifying conditions. Some periods were too influential in broadening and defining the scope of musical expression to be ignored. I

shall endeavor to make my theories in regard to the origin and growth of music accord with its inherent qualities, as well as with man's devious and changing nature. The greater the music the more direct is its appeal to our imaginations, and the stronger its effect upon our emotions. Each intrinsically great composition has its distinguishing mood or temperament, which is the sequential expression and perpetuation of an emotion. This mood is first announced by the chosen themes, and then its varied phases and the cumulative intensity essential to sustained expression are secured through the logical manipulation of these themes.

I would divide music into two classes, natural and artificial. The latter class is, as the name assigned to it implies, a mechanical combination of musical means, the result of purely intellectual processes, incited by will force, and not

by inspiration. It lacks all reason for being, and I shall dismiss it without further ceremony. It is to natural music, which springs from our imaginations, is formulated for purpose by intellect, appeals to the sympathies, and sways the emotions, that I shall devote my attention. The music of the barbarous races, although developed little beyond the initial stage, is adapted in its character to their habits and sensibilities, and is among them quite as powerful an agency for stimulating the passions as is our nineteenth-century music among the people of this Western civilization. Their musical exercises are purely emotional, and therefore natural.

Natural music is composed of two species, that which is earnest and edifying, and that which is entertaining only. These diverse growths are equally spontaneous, and each develops form, substance, and proportions in keeping with

the intellectual soil by which it is nurtured.

The world requires that music shall suit its varying moods. Some of Johann Strauss's waltzes are quite as genuine music as are Beethoven's symphonies, and each in its own way contributes to the pleasure and benefit of mankind. Which would be the greater loss, were it blotted out of existence, is unquestionable, for the resultant deprivation must be measured by the comparative numbers who would feel the lack of each. The great majority of the public, and even some of music's devotees, derive more pleasure from entertaining than from earnest (so-called classical) music. This is partly because earnest music is quite often abstruse, requiring well-directed mental effort to understand its full significance; but a more generally prevailing reason for this condition (especially when dance music is concerned)

is to be found in its cheering and exhilarating effect.

I think it pure affectation for musical persons to express a lack of respect for a good piece of dance music. A large percentage of those who do so are not sincere. They fear to discredit their appreciation of the classical, thinking wrongly that there would be something incongruous in liking both. The artist's ideals should embrace the whole gamut of human feeling, and music that strikes our sensibilities at any point in this line is genuine, whether it be a symphony, a love song, or a waltz.

If music be the language of the emotions, its germs must be those sounds through which joy, grief, love, fear, rage, wonder, and longing find natural, unpremeditated, and often involuntary expression. The fact that the import of these sounds, whether produced by man, beast, or bird, is unmistakable, has led some

writers to accord music the honor of having been the initial means of intercourse between members of the human family,—the original language. This is hardly consistent, for life is mostly unrhythmic monotone, punctuated only here and there by episodes fruitful in musical germs.

Scientific observation has established the fact that all of the higher species of living things have forms of vocal intercommunication. Like human beings, animals have forms of speech comporting with their degrees of intelligence and needs, but quite apart from these forms, they and man have mutually intelligible codes of emotional expression. These codes are not identical in less essential details, nor are they equally comprehensive, but they spring from a common source. They vary in character according to the qualities of instinctive feeling, refined or coarse, that dominate the creatures that employ them.

The lowest grade of animal life which possesses vocal apparatus is susceptible of but three emotions—anger, longing, and fear—in such measure as to elicit expression. The higher grades feel joy, love, sorrow, anger, fear, and longing.

Music has significance only when fraught with messages from the composer to the hearer. Therefore those sounds which most clearly voice strong emotions are the most pregnant musical germs. Isolated shouts of triumph, rage, and joy, or cries of pain, fear, and entreaty, appeal to our sensibilities, but they do not suggest music, although its line of development from these primal elements is traceable. It began with the first intellectual recognition of the adequacy of tonal expression, when those sounds which had been involuntarily produced as the result of sensations, were placed by the human mind in the category of expressive means.

At this point our germs came under the influence of deliberate purpose. Intellect took spontaneous shouts, cries, and moans in hand, and has gradually endowed them with continuity, life pulsation (rhythm), and *form;* has made them express sentiments surcharged with emotions, creating a definitely significant atmosphere (*stimmung*). This pervading atmosphere or mood, which is a vital element in successful musical effort, must be in no wise confounded with the situations incident to and arising through the descriptive (*program*) composer's art. The first is personal, a heart mood; the second is impersonal, a brain picture.

From this first step in musical evolution intellect has been more and more closely associated with emotion, as the composer's intentions have become more definite and his *forms* more extended.

Music's progress has not been uniform, for it is most sensitive, and the

conditions have often been unfavorable. It has followed, to a great degree, the tidal fluctuations of refinement and fine sensibility in the masses; for although its growth is dependent upon certain conditions, these necessary conditions, if confined within narrow limits, or when found only in isolated persons, will not suffice.

It must breathe a free air, full of sympathetic feeling and impulse, and it must have a broad, deep soil in which to spread its roots, for it aspires heavenward, up through the material into the ideal.

The growth of music from its initial stage to an art is quite analogous, except in time consumed, to the growth of each talent to maturity, or of each musical conception to full expression. They all move on towards realization, impelled by art instinct and imagination. The composer of to-day has a legendary past,

full of romance and heart-throbs, and a warm, sympathetic present, to stimulate his fancy, but it required ages of joy, sorrow, love, and culture to quicken and refine man's stoical nature. The soil which nourishes our imaginations has been made fertile by the blood and tears of countless generations.

CHAPTER II

MUSIC'S FIRST ERA, AND THE INFLUENCES WHICH WERE OPERATIVE IN VARIOUS LANDS DURING ITS CONTINUANCE

THERE are two distinct eras in the course of the evolution of music. The first ended and the second began with the invention and adoption of notation. This mechanical device so revolutionized musical production and taste, that we may properly concede to it the honor of having made possible the formulation of our art, for it chronicled the accomplishments of each generation, thus furnishing its successors with suggestive models. These were virtually lacking in the first era, which accounts amply for the little advancement made during its continuance.

That early career of music is shrouded in utter darkness, unbroken by a single luminous episode, and the lights which we are enabled to throw back upon it are entirely deductive.

They are not sufficiently strong to bring details into relief, but they suffice to develop outlines which are ample for the purposes of my sketch. The fact that the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Chinese devoted much attention to what some are pleased to call the science, or technic, of music is to me no indication of the condition of music existing at that time. Their libraries contained numerous volumes devoted to music, but their treatises considered melody (harmony was not known) from a purely mathematical stand-point. This vital element of music, which should be as free as air, was fettered by pedantry.

I feel convinced that the evolution of music was seriously delayed by this too

early association with science. China has perpetuated this system of vassalage, the result being that her present temple melodies, which also serve as folk-songs, are utterly devoid of plastic grace and spontaneity. The fallibility of long lines of oral transmission casts doubt upon the Chinaman's claim that he inherits at least a portion of these songs, in their original form, from a period four thousand years back; still, there is one feature of the situation which, in a measure, substantiates it,—viz., the instinct for imitation that distinguishes this race from all others.

Evolution involves removal from an elementary state, and we measure its advancement through placing the present outlines and qualities, of whatever may be concerned, over against those that characterized some known previous condition.

China has produced some great

scholars, and her civilization, such as it is, endures like the everlasting hills, and seems subject to little more change than they, but her people are not emotional, imaginative, nor susceptible to influences from without. The great wonder is not that real art feeling has never manifested itself in China, nor that she has repulsed all attempts to introduce the fruits of European musical culture, but that the Chinaman, with his nature, should have ever evoked our muse. China has contributed nothing to the development of music, and we cannot draw one spark of light from her for our investigations. The Mongolian race treated their feeble first musical impulse as they still do the feet of high-caste female children,—viz., they wrapped it so tightly in pedantic cerements that it could not grow; and, being an impulse, and not flesh and bones, it failed to endure the repression.

Although these ancient scientific treatises afford no clues to the actual spirit and form of contemporaneous musical utterances, they do bespeak the presence of interest and respect. As I have shown, this condition was of no service in China, but as the Egyptian and Greek people and culture were of a quite different substance and mould, we may safely infer that their efforts were important features in this preparatory era.

The light which we are enabled to throw backward over the line of musical evolution is drawn from the following sources: 1, the nature of music itself, and the first purposeful use of its germs; 2, its present condition among barbarous peoples; 3, profane history of ancient Egypt; 4, its development in pace with that of the Aryan race; and, 5, Biblical references (to which I shall devote a separate chapter).

NATURE OF MUSIC

It is a gross misconception to regard music as merely a "concord of sweet sounds," for that would be a barren art which had no contrasting features. Much great music is not beautiful, for it may be tragical, sombre, or may voice any of the moods incident to life. Euphony was doubtless one of the last developed qualities, for it springs from joy, love, or reverence. We must look among the coarser emotions for the germ which was first used in tone expression.

In that prehistoric time, at the beginning of what might be called soul tenantry, man, whether created or evolved, being the first of his line, had no fruits of human experience to guide him, and his emotional status could therefore have differed little from that of the higher grades of soulless creatures. We learn

from history that since it began its annals animal nature has remained virtually unchanged, whereas man, because possessed of a higher grade of intellect and a definite recognition of Deity, in one form or another, has refined and broadened the scope of his impulses and understanding. As it is the first subjective, and not objective, manifestation of tone expression that we are seeking, we cannot do better than to scan this feature of animal life.

Such manifestations result from the sequential co-operation of emotion, reason, and impulse. Animals have their growls, roars, and trumpetings of anger and defiance, and many of them have forms of expressing affection, but these latter are acquired through experience, whereas they instinctively appeal to agencies outside themselves for relief from pain or want, employing means the efficacy of which they recognize. If

we turn to humankind, we find that the new-born babe will express its desire for food long before it becomes responsive to its mother's endearments.

I, therefore, assume that pleading was the first purposeful, premeditated form of tonal communication, and, consequently, that it was the nucleus about which experience and culture have gathered such ample resources. (This term, tonal communication, applies equally well to our formulated art, for music is invariably addressed by its creator to some intelligence, whether it be a person, the world, or God.)

This first developed element has never relinquished its prominence, for it is the mood which most often pervades the composer's tone pictures. We find it depicted, as prompted by each and all phases of human insufficiency, appealing to appropriate sources for relief,—the

oppressed entreating the tyrant, the lover the object of his affection, and the finite world, prostrate before Infinity, pouring its hopes and aspirations into the Divine ear.

Now occurs a period of unmeasurable time upon which we can throw no light. It extends from this first manifestation up to that stage in evolution which produced forms of tonal expression like those now employed by the lowest savage races. Some time during this unexplorable period, man having appropriated a fuller vocabulary from nature's store, and having adopted more sustained, and at the same time articulate, forms, was led to feel pulsations,—incipient rhythm. Whether this primitive conception of metre was suggested by associated word successions, or was incident to the extension of tonal expression itself, we can only conjecture, but rhythmic impulse is evident in, and

it is the main feature of, the crudest musical efforts.

MUSIC OF THE SAVAGE RACES

Science has long busied itself with race origin. It has approached the problem from every side, and has accomplished so much towards its solution as to afford grounds upon which to base the assumptions that the diverse types of mankind, as they now exist, are each physically, morally, and mentally the outcome of conditions of which climate, soil, and degrees of isolation have been the most potent factors ; and that these branches which have spread out to cover the world spring from one common family trunk. Even within the limits of historic time migrations have been caused either by climatic changes or by the dissensions incident to over-population.

When the savages of the South Sea

Islands became detached, and whether of their own volition or through a dispensation of Providence, which caused the Pacific Ocean to isolate them from less pestiferous humanity, will never be known. It must, however, have taken place after the idea of at least limited tone expression had taken a firm hold on mankind and had become a transmittible instinct, for these savages evince little more disposition or capacity for originating than the more intelligent species of animals. I cite these people and their lyric status to mark the lowest ebb in things human and musical of which we have any knowledge.

Their music and habits are alike crossed by the line which separates the human from the animal, and it is needless to say which quality contributes the larger portion. Their songs are, like their language, ejaculatory, showing little exercise of reason in their forms, and

voicing the baser emotions solely. Rude rhythms are the only features that attest their origin in musical impulse. Music in its course of evolution had necessarily to pass through this primitive stage. In more congenial environments it passed on and out, but these barbarians, being neither emotionally nor intellectually capable of imparting the impetus requisite to the development of finer and broader significance, have for thousands of years used their present crude forms. Their stage comes in touch with music's line of evolution at a period countless years before David sang.

From a letter in response to my inquiries as to the musical status of these barbarians, written by Count Pfeil, who has most closely observed their customs during twenty years spent in exploring the dark continent and these darker islands, I infer that their barbarism has

grades analogous to those that exist in the culture of civilized nations.

In speaking of the two musical instruments in use Graf Pfeil says, "They are the 'Tutupele' on New Britain and Duke of York, and a sort of pan pipe or flute on the Solomon Islands. The former may hardly be called an instrument. It is used in connection with the superstitious ceremonies of the Dult-Dult practice, and is supposed to herald the appearance of the spirits. Two pieces of wood are carved down till they sound two neighboring notes, such as c–d, g–a, or f–g. They are then placed over a little hollow dug in the ground, and are beaten with small club sticks. . . .

"The other instrument is used by the Solomon Islanders. They assemble three or four men, each armed with his flute, of which the largest pipe is about three feet in length, with a two-inch internal diameter. There are five of these pipes

in each instrument. They are made of bamboo, and played by being raised to the lips and strongly blown into. The sound, especially when heard from a long distance, which robs it of its harshness, is not at all unpleasant, but has rather a melodious, though sad, character. The few men who play these instruments begin turning round and round, and others, wishing to join in the dance, gather round them, also moving in a circle. When a hundred dancers perform, those on the outside run at a headlong speed, while those forming the centre spin, but very slowly. The dancers accompany the players by very curious half-whistling sounds, which sound like the twitter of birds. The louder and shriller the sounds the prettier they are thought to be. . . .

"On the Duke of York, boys have a curious, cruel way of procuring music. They take a large beetle and break

off one of its legs. In the remaining stump they push a lot of elastic gum, of which they hold the other end. The beetle is now made to fly, but not being able to get away from the boy's hand, keeps circling round and round it, emitting a loud whirring or humming sound. . . .

"All these races sing. Their songs are very monotonous, but are defined, like our own. You can ask them to sing such or such a song, and they will always sing it exactly as they sang it before. All songs are sung in a subdued voice, as the melancholy and suspicious character of the people prevents all loud demonstrations of mirth. . . . I have never heard their songs accompanied by any instrument, excepting at a dance, when, to my sorrow, combined vocal and instrumental efforts served as an accompaniment to the dance."

The North American Indians, despite

the demoralizing influences of traders, agencies, and fire-water, are noble men as compared with the cannibals just considered. Many of their less amiable traits are doubtless the fruits of white intruders' avarice, which has from the first set aside equity when dealing with the red man. They live having a future state in view in the happy hunting-grounds, which stimulates in them a strict, but not too comprehensive, moral consciousness. Those conditions of life which mould race characteristics have in the case of the North American Indian developed bodily activity, close observation, bravery, and reasoning faculties, though crude. They lack delicate sensibility and imagination, but still in them we find nomadic manhood at its best, and their music mirrors their character.

Their war, funeral, and joyous songs are alike monotonous to modern Aryan ears, for they are devoid of romance and

fine feeling, and are composed of repetitions *ad libitum*, instead of progressive developments. Their climaxes are produced through increased unction in delivery rather than through sequential means. They mark the primary pulsations of their songs through swaying the body, dancing, and through the use of rude instruments, and in so doing work themselves up to a remarkable state of exaltation. This result of their musical exercises must not be construed as indicating the presence of a strong, emotional element in the Indian character. They are, on the contrary, so stolid that few things can ruffle their equanimity. Their ecstasies are purposeful and self-induced.

Their phenomenal capacity for reading and interpreting nature's chronicle of the movements of living things, and its continual exercise, have blinded them, in a great degree, to the beauties of

landscape. They devote themselves to the analysis of details instead of to the contemplation of the Creator's harmonious ensemble, and they consequently develop little sense for the beautiful. The fundamental manifestation of this sense is, in normally endowed man, an appreciation of the forms and colors of material things. Upon this sense we may build responsiveness to the intangible and ideal, but without it we have no foundation for æsthetic taste. I can think of nothing more incongruous than an atmosphere of Bach fugues or Beethoven symphonies for a man who sees only tons of hay, feet of lumber, water-power, etc., while gazing upon nature's grand panorama. The music of the North American Indian is neither euphonious nor romantic, but it is distinctly more human than that of the South Sea Islanders, and its varying tribal phases permit the inference that it has, in their keeping,

accumulated resources, however slight they may seem.

The Indian's character and music throw light upon the course of evolution during the first era, inasmuch as they, contrasted with those of the cannibal races, tend to substantiate my claim that sound expression takes its cue from attendant culture, advancing in pace with it.

PROFANE HISTORY OF ANCIENT EGYPT

At that remotest period upon which the historian can throw light (about 3000 B.C.) the Valley of the Nile was the scene of undertakings the fruits of which have ever since excited the wonder of the world. The Pyramids, the somewhat later-built Palace of Karnak, and Temples of Luxor and Ipsambul stand first among the phenomenal conceptions of human architects; and the mechanical skill required in handling the

massive blocks and pillars of which they are composed would severely test the appliances of our practical and inventive age. These monumental buildings, their consistent environments, and the deciphered records of scientific and literary accomplishments in those earliest historic times, bespeak broad culture. As we possess no record of a race from whom the Egyptians could have drawn either stimulus or knowledge itself, their culture was presumably indigenous, and therefore of slow growth. The Palace of Karnak, for instance, marks the climax of accomplishment in a line of architectural endeavor which may have begun soon after the Nile commenced making her alluvial deposits.

The persistent and audacious ambition which this long course of development attests, and the art feeling expressed in their works, endows Egyptian interest in music, as evinced through the

scientific treatises mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, with especial significance. They were more learned and less pedantic than the Chinese, and were, besides, emotional and imaginative, although sadly superstitious. Had that high enlightenment permeated all classes of the people, Egypt would have been an Elysium for our art, but it was, unfortunately, confined to the upper social grades, which embraced the priests, and to a certain extent the warriors.

The masses, in company with prisoners of war and slaves from Central Africa, were mere servitors to the monarchs and priests in executing their ambitious schemes. Although their labor built up indubitable testimony to the greatness of their masters, the burdens imposed upon them century after century finally wore away their fealty; therefore the decadence and downfall of great Egypt. There could not possibly

have been anything like art enthusiasm among a people so oppressed. Despite this vital lack, ancient Egypt did more, directly and indirectly, to foster music, and to give it an onward impulse, than all other agencies of the first era combined. This was somewhat attributable to the fact that then, for the first time, tone expression was associated with rhythmic texts; still, I infer that their music was merely an accessory to euphonious declamation,—subservient to poetry,—for had their melodies possessed independent import, those resourceful people would have found some way of recording them. These relations between music and poetry were perpetuated in Greece; indeed, our art was not accorded equality as a contributive element in song until in quite modern times. There have been several distinct epochs in this relationship,—viz., that in which tone expression, be-

cause of its little understood capacities, was held in vassalage to her sister art; music's equality (dating from the adoption of notation), during which she greatly extended and beautified her forms; her ascendency, which characterized the vocal works of the early part of the present century; and now the Wagner school, in which the two are again made to collaborate on equal terms.

The ancient Egyptians employed pan pipes, flutes, horns, instruments of percussion, and small harps. Mural pictures of the fourth dynasty represent players blowing upon pipes of different lengths, and consequently of different pitches, which is a dumb declaration that at least some principles regulating the simultaneous use of tones had been recognized. Outside this pictorial record, we can find no intimation that anything analogous to modern harmony was known and practised by this people.

In the absence of specific data we are forced to predicate the condition of music in that stupendous, though exclusive, civilization, upon the elements of the atmosphere from which it drew its impulse. As the more prominent of these elements were profound religious feeling, scientific learning, insatiable ambition, and a clearly pronounced lyric tendency, their melodies must have been coherent and expressive.

ARYAN RACE

As the instincts and capacities of the Aryan race have always been unique, it may prove instructive to glance at those features of its prehistoric existence in Asia which have been brought to light through comparative philology and mythology. In the first place, these sciences establish the fact that we of the West (Greeks, Italians, Germans, English) and the Hindoos of the East are

of common origin. Our ancestors listened to the same legends, ballads, and mythical tales while gathered as children about one and the same mother, and they have handed them down to this generation of the descendants of each so little changed as to furnish ample proof of family relationship. Many of the more important words of the various Aryan languages are suggestively similar, and this in spite of the five thousand years of transmission, and of the diverse conditions incident to the growth of widely separated clans into great nations.

The Aryans were worshippers of Nature in her more spectacular and heroic forms and moods,—in storms, fire, sunset, and dawn, but looked upward for their Supreme Deity. The sky, with its fathomless depths of blue and its star mysteries, was their Zeus. From this it will be seen that they were,

in a way, idolaters, but their idolatry was not degrading ; it was, indeed, ennobling. They contemplated Nature, and in her processes saw the hand of an all-pervading, beneficent power,—a God. They worshipped the God thus, and in no other way, revealed to them through His works.

Their conceptions of family and community organization have served, and still serve, as models to civilized nations. They were paternal, the clans being large families with patriarchal heads, and elected councillors. They were pastoral, cultivating the soil and herding cattle, sheep, horses, and pigs ; but they were at the same time good warriors. They wore leathern shoes, garments woven from wool, and they had at least a rudimentary knowledge of the sciences.

From all this I infer that the early Aryans were a race of freemen, not

subject to the class discrimination that ruined Egypt.

Their appreciation of nature, and their reverence, ambition, and pertinacity fitted them to become the especial guardians of the arts, and their comparative class equality enabled them to fulfil the requirements of my theory that music can only flourish in a widely diffused interest and knowledge. It must breathe a genial and suggestive atmosphere.

Our main business is with Aryan music after it came under the influence of Egyptian culture, but it may interest my readers to flash, for a moment, the light of analogy back upon its earlier period. We have found the early Aryans less learned than the Egyptian scholar class, but also less superstitious and less pedantic. They were normal human beings in their occupations, susceptibilities, and social life. With such a picture in view it is quite natural for

our imaginations to hear its complement in expressive sounds,—peaceful lullabies, songs of praise and love, and sonorous rejoicings.

In remote times the region which is supposed to have been the original home of the Aryans must have been fertile, for early poets were enthusiastic in describing its charms. The climatic changes that made the soil arid as it is to-day may have suggested, or may even have necessitated, migration; still, what condition or combination of conditions induced the Aryans to abandon Central Asia can never be positively known; but it is certain that they, like irresistible tidal waves, rolled westward and southward, destroying, carrying before them, or absorbing and dominating all peoples and institutions in their course.

One of the streams of Aryan migration flowed towards the south and formed the Hindoo and Persian nations, and an-

other came into Europe by way of the Hellespont and took up its abode in Greece and Italy. Three others, the Celtic, Teutonic, and Slavonic, followed in the order named, passing to the north of the Black Sea, and occupied respectively Western, Central, and Eastern Europe.

Of all the nations who have developed from these original nuclei, the Hindoos show least evidence of close intercourse with the world's great teacher, whereas the Greeks, perhaps because of their proximity to Egypt, were led to avail themselves of her tuition to the fullest extent.

The ancient Hindoos were less scientific than the Chinese or Egyptians, and isolation has prevented them from advancing with modern civilization. Their music is less the fruit of theories than it is of natural Aryan impulse. They do not look upon it as a science, but as a

matter of the emotions, the result of, and intended to quicken, the imagination. I have seen Hindoo melodies which exhibited a correct appreciation of rhythmic adjustment, still their accomplishments do not entitle them to a place among the potent factors in musical evolution.

Now we come to the climax of our first era. Such a true conception of beauty, such perfect symmetry, and such far-reaching imagination and lofty aspiration as are present in, and have made ancient Greek art and literature luminous for all time, bespeak conditions that would have carried music to fruition during their continuance had she not been so intangible, and therefore necessarily slow in developing. Had her nature been less coy, we might have ancient Greek music as monumental as the Iliad or the Parthenon.

The Greeks were quick to recognize the virtues of Egyptian learning, and

Greece soon became great Egypt's greater pupil. Still, we should accord Egypt first place among the factors that built up modern civilization and led to the formulation of musical art, for she originated the vital impulse.

That period of Greek culture supremacy dispensed no laurels to its mothers, wives, and daughters. Woman was regarded as an inferior being, and she took no honorable part in intellectual social life. Boys were exhaustively educated, while girls were neglected. This was the one blot on the glory of those times, and we, besides deprecating the injustice it involved, must regret that these ancient art-workers denied themselves that highest earthly source of inspiration, intercourse with the delicate enthusiasm, the keen perceptions, and art instinct of educated and loved womanhood; for to what heights might their achievements have attained but for

this misconception of woman's nature and capacities!

One would think that Sappho's lyrics, which induced Plato to call her the "Tenth Muse," would have suggested the existence, in woman's purer and more sensitive nature, of a subtle vein of beautiful intellectuality, but such was not the case. Judging from what we have seen of early Aryan family life, this unpractical and debasing idea of suppressing woman must have been imbibed with Egyptian learning.

Music was taught in the Greek schools, and youths were thus fitted to join in the sacred choruses, and to appreciate the significance of poetry. The immortal bards sang their creations, and they often remained unwritten for generations. The drama developed from songs and dances. Music was a prominent feature of their symposiums, the lyre being passed from guest to guest,

each contributing of his best to the intellectual feast. Banquets were brought to a close by singing hymns. Music pervaded each function of Hellenic life.

Their choruses were unisons, and their instrumental accompaniments were either purely rhythmic (regardless of pitch) or they followed the voice, for the Greeks had no discoverable conception of harmony. In contemplating the marvellous erudition and the poetic sense of ancient Greece, and the important *rôle* played by music in the period of her glory, I can but feel that the failure to chronicle her melodies is a misfortune. They may not have been rich in variety of tone succession or in rhythm, but they doubtless were vigorous, expressive, and logically rounded, and they therefore mark the brightest point reached in the first era.

Greece succeeded Egypt as the world's teacher, and her precepts gain

significance as advancing culture enables us to better comprehend the fine adjustment of imagination to nature which they embody. Her sculpture, architecture, and literature are the highest models that we have, and those of our architects who appreciate the import of monumental buildings look to ancient Greece for appropriate inspiration.

Is it not reasonable and logical to assume that the spirit of Greece's unwritten musical forms has been preserved, passed from nation to nation, and from generation to generation, and that it underlies our present classical school? I say spirit in speaking of musical transmission, for music's resources and outward forms were, in the Homeric period, and still are, in course of development.

It would be a waste of space to discuss the musical doings of other European nations during this period. Those that did least to prepare the way have

been most active since our art took shape. As great as Italy's services have been since the sixteenth century (A.D.), she did little for music previous to that time. St. Ambrose, of Milan (384 A.D.), and St. Gregory, of Rome (590 A.D.), ordained rituals, prayers, music, etc., but there is no detailed record of their achievements, therefore no authentic Gregorian chants.

CHAPTER III

BIBLICAL MENTION OF MUSIC

THE Old Testament is a chronicle of the growth, movements, physical and mental habits, and religious status of the great Jewish race. Its religion with one Godhead, whose immediate presence was often felt, its music addressed to this presence, and its family, tribal, and racial organizations were all Jewish. The great moving lever of Jewish existence was a religion whose creed prohibited the making of "graven images," so painting and sculpture were not cultivated; it recognized the direct agency of supreme will in moulding daily events, and prescribed oft-repeated praise and prayer, and thus created the atmosphere of exalted devo-

tional feeling which we find recorded in many of the books of the Bible, and which climaxed in David's Psalms.

The ancient Hebrews were in no measure a scientific people. Their one intellectual aspiration found vent in beautifying the worship of God. They were religious teachers, who have directly or indirectly shaped the creeds of the civilized world.

According to the conditions upon which I have thus far based my theories of musical evolution, early Jewish songs could not have been equal, in artistic merit, to the texts with which they were associated, for there was an utter lack, in this race, of such general culture and art sense as we found prevailing in ancient Egypt; but the Hebrews were a race apart, and their unique instincts may have made their music an exception to all rules.

Their song-impulse was confined to

one line, but it was so strong that it projected itself from conception, in religious enthusiasm, to a high grade of fulfilment without touching the low plane of their general culture ; nevertheless, the above-mentioned shortcomings and the subsequent decadence of race nationality relegate Hebrew music to a low place as an influence upon the world's song.

They had men who devoted themselves to the playing of instruments as an accompaniment to song, and the Bible mentions more varieties of instruments than can be found in profane history of those times. Worship was such an important feature of Jewish life, and praise was so essential an element in their worship, that the masses must have learned and sung those great lyrics which to-day represent the culmination of human awe, reverence, prayer, and thanksgiving. It is impossible to im-

agine David singing his Psalms to crude or inadequate musical settings.

Here we have a situation apparently full of vital contradictions. Most of the influences which have proven themselves necessary to the development of music were wanting, and still there is evidence that it had grown to be an expressive means. The Jews were actuated by profound religious feeling and by an exquisite sense of nature's forms. No poet has yet equalled David's simple but beautiful appreciation of the universe, and of its influence upon mankind.

The Jews of Poland, Spain, and Germany have diverse musical settings of the Psalms, so there is no traceable line of inheritance from David. This line has been obliterated by the changes incident to generations of unassisted memory. That there may be rare exceptions to this rule of change in form

during extended oral transmission was abundantly proven recently by a German Hebrew musician and scholar. He played me an unwritten Passover hymn which his father had always sung at that festival time, and told me that he had not long before been entertained by a Spanish Hebrew, who sang the same melody tone for tone. This gentleman's hearing and memory are so absolute that there is no question to be raised as to this case; but as far as my investigations have gone, it stands alone.

The composer of the nineteenth century can nowhere else find such earnest and suggestive texts as in the Old Testament. They voice the hopes, sorrows, despair, reverence, and joys of our hearts just as aptly as they did those of the Hebrew bards who wrote them thousands of years ago. Their natural and direct method of expressing the emo-

tions, and their incomparable elevation of spirit, make them appeal especially strongly to the musician, whose flights of imagination start from these emotions.

We are denied the privilege of scanning the forms and substance of Biblical melodies or chants, and must content ourselves with tracing the more prominent features of the *rôle* which was assigned to music during that older era, and the mechanical devices which were employed to enhance rhythmic precision and sonority.

Some writers have endeavored to solve the problem presented by Hebrew music in the midst of incongruous conditions by attributing its development to the influence of presumable intercourse with prehistoric Egyptian civilization. This does not appear logical, for Hebrew music seems to have been little, if at all, affected by the con-

tinued direct contact during the long sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt.

The Jewish and Egyptian characters were so diametrically opposed (as was evinced in their beliefs, habits, and aspirations) that their emotional forms of expression could not possibly have followed common lines.

Intercourse with Egyptians did not impart even a scientific impulse to the Hebrew mind. It is therefore safe to conclude that my previously mentioned hypothesis—that the force of their impulses carried Jewish music and poetry to unique positions, as compared with those of their other arts and branches of learning—is worthy of credence.

The first mention of music is made in Genesis iv. 21. Jubal, the son of Lamech and Adah, is described as the "father of all such as handle the harp and organ." Jubal was of the seventh generation of Adam's descendants, and

the world was, according to Biblical records, in its second century of existence. These "harps and organs" were doubtless similar to those depicted in pictures painted in the fourth Egyptian dynasty. The first named were frames upon which one or, at most, a very limited number of strings were stretched, and the "organs" were pan-pipes (a series of reeds of graded lengths, bound together, and played by blowing into them as they were passed back and forth across the lower lip). The pan-pipes were probably played in unison with the voice, whereas the primitive harp was used, with the existing instruments of percussion, to mark rhythms only.

All historians agree in their deductions as to the order in which the several classes of instruments made their appearance on the musical stage. As rhythm is the heart pulsation of music,

it naturally took hold of the first singers of in any measure formulated melody, leading to swaying of the body, clapping of the hands, stamping of the feet, and quickly suggested the employment of other resonant means for marking its progress. Our drums were at first only hollow pieces of wood, our cymbals, triangle, and gong may have had double duties,—musical and culinary,—and our harp and piano were anticipated by single strings stretched to yield a sonorous tone regardless of pitch.

Next came the wind instruments,—at first single reeds blown to mark rhythms, then pan-pipes, and much later single pipes provided with finger-holes like the unimproved flute. Last of all came the instruments from which the tones are drawn by passing a bow over the strings. The idea of adapting the vibrating length of strings to a desired pitch, through pressing them down upon a finger-

board, is comparatively modern. These general classes took on numerous forms and were made from various materials.

The existence of Jubal and his musical line of descendants bespeaks a widespread interest in and use of song, but Genesis yields no further enlightenment, no texts, nor any other allusions to the subject of music.

Exodus xv. furnishes the next mention. The treacherous quicksands of the Red Sea having swallowed up the Egyptians, Moses and the children of Israel join in a song of rejoicing and thanksgiving to God, to whose direct interposition they ascribe their deliverance. The song as recorded is too circumstantial to have been spontaneous. Moses, in writing his account of the occurrence, doubtless embodied the sentiments which burst forth from the hearts of his people in the presence of the event in a more orderly and more amplified form.

The sentiments are lofty, and the effect produced by the singing of that vast chorus of just rescued was, beyond compare, the grandest focus of human enthusiasm that the world has witnessed; for Moses had six hundred thousand fighting men alone.

"Miriam the prophetess," after the song, or during lapses in the singing, to incite the throng to renewed efforts, "took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and dancing. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea." The timbrels were drums, probably much like our tambourines in size and shape.

The trumpet is mentioned three times in the nineteenth and twentieth chapters of Exodus in connection with the delivery to Moses of the Commandments.

The last occasion is after the consummation of this universe-shaping ceremony,—viz., "And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking."

The thirty-second and thirty-third chapters of Deuteronomy contain one of the Bible's most sombre lyrics. Moses, whose life has been devoted to the welfare of the Israelites, who has for forty years struggled to overcome in them the demoralization incident to centuries of bondage, sings there a parting song to his people, for they are about to enter into possession of the promised land, which happiness is denied him. Could a sadder picture be imagined than this good man, so little confident in the fruits of his past teaching, exhorting the Israelites for the last time?

It would make my sketch tiresome to burden it with the less important musical

events chronicled in sacred history, like the songs of Deborah, Hannah, etc., so I shall skip four centuries, the musical exercises of which seem to have been marked by no extraordinary occurrences, unless we accept the fall of Jericho as a musical phenomenon.

At the end of this period we come upon David, who might appropriately be called the Isaiah of our art, for his songs voice the conception of a full, free, resourceful musical fruition, unmeasured as yet by even the greatest composers who have given them settings. I. Samuel xvi. makes the first mention of David's musical capacity,—viz., "And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me. . . . And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took a harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil

spirit departed from him." David's first recorded "psalm of thanksgiving" is in II. Samuel xxii. Its power, vivid imagery, and conception of omnipotence have never been surpassed by the mind of man. It is musically suggestive and inspiring, but a composer capable of grasping its import might be awed into silence, for our art is still feeble to attempt such flights. A careful reading of verses five to eighteen, inclusive, will yield an understanding of my feelings in regard to this song.

There is in much earnest music a substratum of "ecclesiastical tone," for the deeper strings of cultivated human responsiveness are attuned to worship. Our relation as creatures to God, the Creator, is the prime factor in inducing this condition, but next to it Biblical song most influences the trend of high musical aspiration. These influences are insidious, and their fruits do not neces-

sarily betoken design on the part of the composer, who may be not at all devout; but he, having imbibed, in common with civilized mankind, the spirit of religion, it permeates, and to some extent characterizes, his highest efforts.

As long as man continues to write music David will not cease to be one of the moving levers in shaping his conceptions. This ecclesiastical tone, when present, does not usually manifest itself in themes, nor in their contrapuntal development, but in the harmonic outlines upon which these elements rest. David is supposed to have written the larger number of the one hundred and fifty Psalms that have come down to us, and it may be interesting to trace some of the musical colors suggested by his more clearly manifested moods. They mirror the deepest recesses of his God-fearing and paternal heart.

The thirteenth Psalm is a wail of sor-

row, which is saved from sinking to despair by David's memory of past mercies. This latter element is analogous in this case to the major harmonies in our modern minor keys, which lend suggestions of coming brightness to our darkest tone pictures.

In the nineteenth Psalm, which begins, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork," we find a spirit of contented contemplation, for which these quoted lines strike the key-note, and announce the *theme* with no uncertain sound.

The twenty-third consists of pastoral similes, which follow each other with quiet but ever-increasing intensity. It is as full of restful confidence and self-contained energy as the slow movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. It is too sustained in its sequential progress to afford the contrasts so essential to composers of mediocre ability, which

may account for the desecrations of which it has been the subject. Nothing so tests the calibre of a musician as logically growing continuity. This Psalm would have found an ideal setting in Bach's lofty serenity.

The spirit of exultation in the praise of the Almighty, which is present in even the sadder moments of David's song, flashing light through its doubts and sorrows, breaks into effulgent glory in the ninety-eighth Psalm, which has probably received more attention from composers than any other Biblical text. It has inspired much wonderful music, but a misconception of the spirit which prompted the last verse has become traditional.

The psalmist did not invoke the floods to clap their hands, and the hills to be joyful together before the Lord, in order to propitiate God, but to express the joy he felt in anticipating the advent of

Him who should "judge the people with equity." To be consistent, the composer should set this sentiment in broad grandeur, as the culmination of his musical scheme.

These examples will suffice to illustrate, in a superficial way, the suggestive richness of David's Psalms.

Isaiah, in chapter v. 12, says, "And the harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts;" indeed, the prophet makes repeated references to music, but not in such manner as to endow his chronicle with special import to us.

I will close this chapter with two instances from the New Testament. The first occurred in connection with the Lord's Supper,—viz., after the administration of the sacrament, and when they had sung a hymn they went out into the Mount of Olives. This quiet hymn will not cease to echo through the universe

until we are enabled to realize St. John's vision of heavenly music, which as described in Revelation (fifth chapter) would form a fitting climax to earthly musical effort.

CHAPTER IV

MUSIC FROM THE INVENTION OF NOTATION TO DATE

THE sweep of events in this new era has been so grand in its cumulative momentum and high tendency, that one is quite as much embarrassed by its richness in data as by the poverty of the older period.

At the opening of its second era music began to make history, and many painstaking and erudite men have devoted the best years of their lives to collating her records; we are therefore amply supplied with books of reference, which fact would seem to justify me in still further pursuing the path marked out by my individual impressions. My deductions and theories may not always

follow beaten paths; indeed, I am only led to discuss the well-known events of this era by the hope that these digressions may afford my readers new points of view, and thus, perhaps, incite them to acquire a more intimate knowledge of the nature of music.

Before commencing our explorations I should like to emphasize the theory advanced in Chapter II.,—viz., that the progress of musical evolution is more or less rapid as the quality of its culture environment is better or less well suited to its requirements. Great composers are not eccentric growths, but they are the natural fruits of the conditions into which they are born and in which they create.

Acorns thrown upon bare rocks will decay; planted in sands exposed to the violent winds from the sea, they grow into gnarled scrubs; but if they fall into a soil possessing qualities calculated to

expand their inherent germs, they become noble oaks, differing in size according to the assertive vitality of their several germs and to the impulses which they receive from earth and sky. These conditions also mould their forms, for their branches reach out for sunlight and rain just as their root-tendrils seek more substantial, but no more necessary, sustenance. This quest gives direction to their growth.

The forest giants are like our Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, and Wagner ; they, like these musical giants, tower above their fellows. Our musicians spread their roots out into the past (into the knowledge of what others have achieved), their aspirations are warmed into activity by the sunlight of widely diffused culture, and their creations take form from their surroundings.

To illustrate my theory : if Beethoven were now living and composing music,

it would necessarily differ as much from that which he did produce, in form and means, as our life conditions and modes differ from those of seventy-five years ago, for such a genius would be quick to feel the presence of new elements in either his material surroundings or art atmosphere.

Some of these new elements are helpful to the composer, while others tend to stifle his spontaneity or to distort the outlines and too much brighten the colors of his tone pictures. In the first class I would put the universal increase of musical intelligence; the mechanical devices, which, as applied to the organ, piano, and most of the orchestral wind instruments, greatly increase their efficiency; Berlioz's idea of color integrity, which has revolutionized orchestral writing; the decrease of conventionality in form; the greater intensity in harmonic successions; and the somewhat

Bach-like import with which the writer of to-day attempts to endow the bass and middle voices.

At the head of the second class (harmful elements) I should place the immense practicality of our age, which intrudes its steam ploughs upon our rural pictures, and, with its unending procession of mechanical innovations, crowds poetic fancy into dark recesses, where she survives but does not thrive; then comes the feverish haste to become rich or famous, which so dominates our generation as to disturb the contemplative moods of the artist, imparting sometimes a suggestion of prosaic utility to his creations, and in other cases endowing them with incongruous form and colors; and last, but not least, comes the modern habit of self-introspection, which, springing from a laudable desire to reason philosophically, smothers spontaneity.

Beethoven would have rebelled against these adverse conditions, but he would nevertheless have been influenced by them. His spirit will defy time, but his models and methods have become antiquated. A modern composer, however gifted, could not follow them without sacrificing his claims to recognition.

We willingly allow Bach and Beethoven to transport us back into their times, and we draw refreshment from the natural atmosphere that pervades them, but would reject a modern product which embodied similar elements; for they would, in such case, be artificial, not the elements suggested by and characteristic of an emotional mood.

Notation, which defined musical achievements, and thus fitted each stage of development to serve as a stepping-stone to formulated art, was unaccountably long in coming.

There is no absolute certainty as to

who invented our present system of writing music, but the honor is usually accredited to Huchbold, of Flanders (840–930). He was a learned Benedictine monk and an ardent worker in the field of music. Huchbold certainly employed a form of notation at least suggestive of that now in use, but, according to some historians, Huchbold's own writings mention the device as if not original with him. He left examples of part writing, which, however, mark no improvement on the implied methods of the ancient Egyptians (suggested through the mural paintings referred to in Chapter II.), for his voices progress in parallel fourths, fifths, and octaves, and consequently have no independent significance.

The earliest example of modern notation is to be seen in the Winchester Cathedral. It is the setting of a prayer, and is supposed to have been written in

1016 A.D. England also claims to have furnished the first example of contrapuntal composition,—a four-voiced canon with two free *bassi*, written in, or prior to, 1240. If this be authentic, it is a phenomenon, like "thunder out of a clear sky," for there was not at that time, nor for three hundred years afterwards, any manifest scientific tendency in England's musical methods. This piece may have been a direct or indirect product of the Flanders school, of which Huchbold was the progenitor.

This learned priest, who strove to materialize and co-ordinate musical means (not its spirit), may be taken as an index of the intellectual bent of his time in the Netherlands, whose people, undaunted by human foes, or by the more merciless sea, which was a perpetual menace to their very existence, devoted much attention to the development of the arts and sciences and to

building up industries. Their intelligent and persistent enterprise walled out the North Sea and made it a tractable servant, and created on those reclaimed marshes a civilization which for several hundred years represented the highest attainments of man.

This earnestness of character and high culture were congenial elements to the growth of music, and there is abundant evidence that their complement, a distinct sense for sound expression, was not wanting, for Taine, in his "Art in the Netherlands," says, "Other people cultivate music; to them it seems an instinct." It is not strange that this instinct, coupled with the perpetuated spirit of Huchbold, should have produced a formulated art at that propitious stage in music's evolution. Music itself had become a ripe impulse, ready and waiting for just such conditions. The Flanders school adjusted tone relationships and invented

counterpoint and canon. John Osteghem and his pupil Despres were the greatest masters of that initial school, which for nearly two centuries, beginning with the middle of the fourteenth, furnished all the European courts with singers, instrumentalists, and composers.

Their more elaborate music was written for the Church, and a damper was consequently put upon production by the Reformation, which greatly simplified religious observances and closed choir doors to the composers of ambitious works.

Before the development of opera and the institution of the concert orchestra and chorus, the Church was the sole patron of high musical endeavor. Fortunately, the Netherland musicians had forestalled the calamitous results of this religious revolution through the establishment of conservatories of music in Venice and Naples. They trans-

planted their knowledge and high aspirations into sunny and Catholic Italy, where they flourished and bore fruit after their native land had ceased to be musically supreme.

A new art is unavoidably over-conservative. The natural laws, upon which it is founded, hold its devotees to literal conformity until experience has evolved a sense of their broader meaning.

They are in reality but rigid outlines, drawn in accordance with fundamental art adjustments, the recognition of which saves the curved lines of our fancy's pictures from abnormity and chaos. They are quite analogous to the anatomical knowledge which is essential to the artist, who conforms to its general requirements and still endows his figures with individual character.

The Netherland music of that period was more intellectual than emotional; therefore, taking the comparative char-

acteristics of the two peoples into account, we can but regard the migration of the focus of musical activity to Italy as an extremely fortunate event; beside the fact that this change of base avoided delay in evolution, or possible decadence.

The emotional Italians would not have made music's foundation as deep or as broad, but they were well fitted to contribute grace and beauty to its superstructure. The sensuous element in music is almost wholly a reflex of Italian temperament. We northern peoples, recognizing the power inherent in this quality, cultivate it with more or less success, but it is an exotic in our colder natures.

Under the influence of Italian character music soon began to assume more graceful lines, purer euphony, and richer significance. Science was further developed, but it was treated as a means,

subject to individual conceptions. The success of this school transplanted from the Netherlands to Italy culminated in the production of Palestrina (1524–1594), the first high-priest of our finally clarified art.

The inherent qualities of music, which were considered at some length in Chapters I. and II., make our art exclusive. They wall it about, forming an outer temple, an inner temple, and a holiest of holies. The first is accessible to all sincere and responsive adherents of the musical faith. The second is for those who minister, priests dedicated to the service. To the innermost sanctuary, which holds the presence of our musical goddess, Aaron-like high-priests alone are admitted, but the song incense which they bring forth diffuses itself, filling the inner and the outer temples to their farthermost recesses. It is primarily to the ministrations of these high-priests

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PALESTRINA

that we owe the widely diffused musical culture of to-day. It shall therefore be one of my tasks to trace the characteristic influence of each one of this line, whose creations will endure throughout time. In the course of music's refining she had necessarily become more and more exclusive, less accessible in her ever higher estate to coarse and uncultivated mankind. This exclusiveness had from the first step in evolution been raising the walls of our now finished temple.

Although most of Italy's early music, like that of the Netherlands, was written for the Church, Palestrina was the first composer to strike a clear ecclesiastical tone. The tendency had been towards brilliancy, with a seasoning of unbecoming sentimentality, and Pope Marcelli, realizing the inappropriateness of such musical settings, conferred with this rising genius, and commissioned

him, in 1563, to write a mass consistent with the spirit of worship. Palestrina's third attempt resulted in the great "Pope Marcelli Mass," which is to-day as acceptable a model for church music as it was in the sixteenth century.

I have chosen Palestrina as the first high-priest because he, like his successors, Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, and Wagner, was a creator, and because his works, like theirs, exhale the incense of the holiest of holies; an incense which, unlike all others, gains power with the passage of time.

Palestrina's works are characterized by lofty purpose and by logically audacious methods. His voice leading was so smooth and melodic as to prompt one of the most erudite of living musicians, who was at first an anti-Wagnerite, to say that "Wagner began with Meyerbeer and ended with Palestrina;" meaning in the latter comparison to pay the

highest possible tribute to the contrapuntal skill and musical methods of the writer of "Die Meistersinger."

Besides Palestrina, Scarlatti and Pergolesi were the only early Italian composers whose music outlived the generation in which it was written. Scarlatti wrote operas, but it is through his pianoforte music that his name has been kept alive. Pergolesi, who appeared on the scene nearly two hundred years later than Palestrina, wrote operas which were received with wild enthusiasm.

During the period of Italy's supremacy (1500–1700) many forms of composition were originated, and many mechanical devices for recording and performing music were invented or perfected. Among the former were the fugue, the oratorio, the latter of which was at first responsive (alternating music and reading), but soon assumed its present character, the mass, and the

opera. (It is astonishing that Monteverde's operas "Arianna" and "Orfeo," produced in 1607–8, embody to some degree Wagner's idea of consistent musical drama.) The organ, violin, and piano-forte were improved, the flageolet, clarionet, bassoon, music type, punches, and metal plates were invented, the first opera-house was built (in Venice), and the elements of modern orchestra (wind, stringed, and percussion instruments) were formally combined.

Flanders' light had shone into France and England, had awakened the people of those lands to a sense of music's latent possibilities, and we find them working intelligently and with good results; but our present aim is to follow the main stream of musical development, guided by the successive "beacon-lights" of achievement, along its course. We will later trace these lesser tributaries.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century two lights of dazzling brilliancy draw our gaze from Italy to Germany. The direct influence of the Netherlands, which made a deep and lasting impression on the slow, but earnest, intellectual, and song-loving Germans, had quickened their susceptibilities, and had made them responsive to the riper musical development of Italy.

The Teutonic character is less emotional and impulsive than the Italian, but it is more methodical, more romantic, and deeper. It is more like that of the Netherlanders, but in measuring their status we must not forget that at the period of which I write two hundred years had passed since the beginning of music's decadence in the northern first home. The Reformation, which had such a depressing effect upon that initial art, incited these less scientifically musical people to song. Luther, who

co-ordinated the modern German language, also struck a song tone, which set the hearts of his race into sympathetic vibration.

The choral voices the deepest strata of German character, and its spirit echoes through their more earnest works,—in the substratum, mentioned in Chapter III.,—so the Reformation marks the beginning of Germany's musical culture, which under direct and indirect guidance and incitement from Italy grew substantially and broadened until the eighteenth century, when the appearance of Händel and Bach evidences a northward turn in the stream of development.

The Italians had contributed the most potent qualities of their nature to this stream, and now the Germans added their deep feeling, intellectual force, and somewhat later their romance. As will be seen, Italy had not entered an inac-

BACH

tive era, but Germany at this period took first place among the factors of evolution, a place she still holds.

My theory in regard to the essential character of widely diffused interest in music finds full endorsement in the conditions which prevailed at that time, and still continue in Germany. Luther's chorals were written for and were sung by the people. Each worshipper found in them a conveyance for his devotional feelings. This feature of church service, this song essence, gradually permeated every-day life and bore wonderful fruit; produced a really musical nation, out of which our second high-priest, Johann Sebastian Bach, and his less German contemporary, George Frederick Händel, could arise.

Before the advent of these giants Germany had written and performed numerous operas, and had in various ways manifested high aspirations, but

her musicians had composed no monumental works.

Her early troubadours, of whom Walther von der Vogelweide was the greatest, and the "Meistersänger," of whom Hans Sachs, who lived 1494–1576, was the most gifted, left no record of their melodies. The very existence of these Meistersänger guilds for hundreds of years shows vitality of purpose and high aim. Spurred on to ever higher accomplishment by friendly rivalry, these guilds doubtless contributed much to the lyric strain in the German nature, and therefore to the ultimate greatness of their "Fatherland." The last of these guilds was disbanded at Ulm in 1836.

Bach was the mightiest man who has composed music. A writer who saw him says, "His black eyes, shining out of his massive head, looked like flames bursting from a rock." He was the descendant of a line that was both men-

tally and physically stalwart. His remotest traceable ancestor was a baker who migrated from Hungary to Saxony, and his son, Johann Sebastian's great-grandfather, was a carpet-weaver and musician. The two succeeding generations devoted themselves exclusively to music, and they furnished half Thuringia with capable musicians. Their conscientious work, however, gave no premonition of the coming sublime climax in their family achievements.

Johann Sebastian Bach inherited an iron will, self-abnegation, and devotion to art. His conceptions soared so far above the existing traditions, and he did so little to attract public attention, that he was but slightly heeded during his lifetime ; indeed, it required a century after his death and the appreciation of a Mendelssohn to make the world realize that a veritable god had lived among men. The modest cantor of Leipzig's

St. Thomas' school was obliged to struggle to support his large family, but he made no concessions to prevailing taste; he did not depart from the lines of his ideal to secure popularity. He patiently submitted to whatever teaching-drudgery was necessary to earn bread for his children, but when seated on his organ-bench or when he took his quill in hand he admitted no other allegiance than that to art, and no other impulse than that which prompted him to serve her with his fullest powers.

The force, dignity, simple loveliness, pathos, and grandeur which in turn characterize his conceptions are so wonderful, when considered as products of the eighteenth century, that they and his serene indifference to recognition stamp him a unique man,—a musical Messiah.

Bach's versatility, facility, and physical endurance were as remarkable in their

way as was the quality of his creations. He wrote for organ, piano, violin, for voices unaccompanied and with organ or orchestra, and asserted his mastery in each and all of these fields. His preserved writings would busy a copyist ten hours per day for fourteen years, and still Bach, in the absence of other outlets, found time to engrave much of his own music. It is to be hoped that the tardy appreciation of his character and works, which have at last filled the world with adoration, may penetrate the Beyond and warm his heart towards mankind, who during his life so little fathomed the depths of his emotions and failed to see the loftiness of his ideals.

Händel was also great, unless compared with his greater contemporary. His best work was the oratorio "Israel in Egypt." His style was a mixture of Italian grace and German vigor. He was a master of vocal resources, and

his works are therefore strong in sonority, and grateful to both singers and hearers. Händel wrote fluently, but with a less sustained earnestness than Bach, and his compositions have done more to foster chorus singing than have all other agencies combined ; for which reason the musical world is but discharging a just debt in assigning to him the place of honor on its vocal repertoires.

Of these two masters, Händel wrote less involvedly. Bach depended upon the legitimate development of his themes, whereas Händel often resorted to tone masses,—was more harmonic than contrapuntal.

Soon after the middle of the eighteenth century the ever-rising flood of musical culture became highest in Vienna. This resulted quite as much from the city's contiguity to Italy, whose lyric springs had by no means run dry, as from the stream of northern influence. Musical

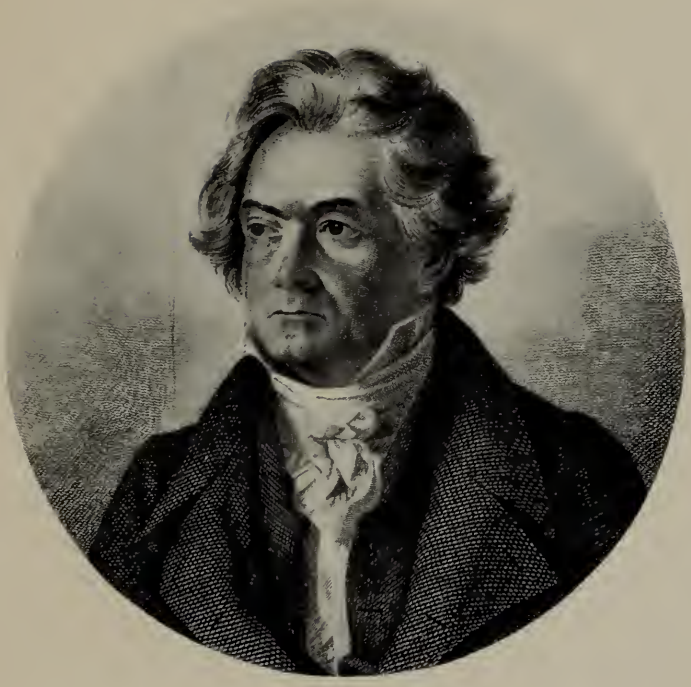
intelligence had by this time become so diffused that bright lights showed themselves at many points on the horizon, but Vienna was made resplendent by a galaxy that illumined her musical life and prepared her for our third and fourth high-priests, Beethoven and Schubert.

The most brilliant of this galaxy were Haydn, Mozart, and Gluck, each and all of whom bequeathed treasures to the world surpassed in value only by those with which our priestly line endowed us. "Papa Haydn" gave expression to his pure aspirations and childlike simplicity in symphonies, stringed quartets, and other ensemble works, and in large vocal compositions. The "Creation" and "Seasons" are his most ambitious writings. Few of Haydn's works have great intellectual power, but they are as refreshing as rural scenes or well-told tales. Mozart and Gluck will be neces-

sarily discussed in Chapter V., so I will pass them now.

Beethoven was our third high-priest, because his somewhat earlier appearance entitles him to precedence over his later coadjutor. The Vienna school had originated or evolved the sonata form, had endowed music with more sustained and more clearly defined melody, richer harmonic color, and dramatic power, and had greatly enriched the orchestra; so Beethoven began his work with far ampler resources at his command and more fertile traditions in which to root his art than had any of his predecessors.

Beethoven was like Bach in many of his characteristics; he was self-reliant, manfully tender, and forcible without violence. His best conceptions are so high and noble that they leave human frailties far behind and suggest the music of the spheres, but he was less



BEETHOVEN

constant in his fidelity to art than Bach; not because he yielded to pressure from without, but because of his impatient nature, which at times impelled him to follow routine rather than wait for inspiration to outline his course. This resulted in lapses, which will, when awe has given place to discriminating judgment, lead the musical world to discard some of his now blindly accepted works. This is to be desired, for those who profess to, or actually do, derive pleasure from all of Beethoven's works are either untrue to themselves, or they are incapable of responsiveness to his supreme moments, which produced such wonders of tonal expression as "Fidelio" and the "Eroica."

It will not matter what forms music may assume in the course of her further evolution, Beethoven's more intensely individual creations will retain their monumental character, looking serenely

upon passing generations of mankind like the Pyramids, but even less perishable than they.

In scanning Beethoven's methods and the spirit which pervades his compositions, as compared with those of Bach, we must take cognizance of the different social and musical conditions which prevailed in their respective periods. Europe was, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, shaking off her powdered wigs and their attendant austerity. Culture was becoming more confident and audacious, and music reflected the features of her new environment in increased geniality and breadth of scope. Beethoven's methods were quite opposed to those employed by Bach. The former drew a grand sweep of outline, and then used counterpoint as a contributive element, whereas thematic counterpoint was the substance of Bach's creations,—the tissue which

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SCHUBERT

gave them form. Each was a reflex of the noblest tendencies of his time.

I approach Schubert, our fourth high-priest, whose ministrations, coming in conjunction with those of Beethoven, make their epoch the most remarkable one in music's career, with wonder for his achievements and regret for his half-lived life. That which was so beautifully said of Keats, "Life of a long life condensed to a mere drop, and fallen like a tear upon the world's cheek, to make it burn forever," would apply equally to Schubert. He was born into a period that had already manifested lyric tendencies, but he was an inexhaustible spring, from which limpid melody gushed in ever-increasing volume, filling his every musical scheme to repletion. Nature made Schubert the greatest musical genius the world has seen, and had his life but reached completeness, he would, perhaps, have drawn from his

emotional well-spring greater symphonies than the "C major" and the "Unfinished."

Schubert was virtually the originator of the modern song, which has been, and always will be, a great solace to mankind. It is at the same time the most practical, because the most easily understood, means of educating musical instinct into sympathy with the spirit that pervades more elaborate forms. The associated texts make clear their musical import, and the appreciation of one really good composition places us on a vantage-ground from which we can better comprehend others. Schubert required the song as a ready outlet for his lyric productiveness, and wrote twelve hundred of them without redundancies and with always definite and distinguishing significance.

Many gifted composers have put their most felicitous fancies into this fireside

form, but, although some have sung more impassionedly, and others have placed their melodies in richer settings, no one has been so uniformly adequate as Franz Schubert. Schumann, Franz, and Jensen always please, and they often excite our wonder by the beauty and adaptability of their song conceptions, but Schubert's songs do not express, they embody, moods and sentiments. His flow of melody was so fresh and strong that in instrumental compositions it often carried him to uncommon length. The Germans call his C major symphony "The Symphony of Heavenly Length." This phrase quite aptly describes the work, for an idea of its proportions, and of the quality which prevents them from being prohibitory, are both voiced by the expressive adjective employed. Schubert scarcely lived to maturity, but he dispensed such unalloyed benefits that his name will be

forever enshrined in the hearts of those who love pure music.

During all this time culture had been making great strides, and a comprehensive glance, at the time of Schubert's death, would have revealed all Europe aflood with musical enthusiasm. Orchestras were multiplied and improved, grand chorus organizations were founded, and institutions for the education of musical aspirants were established under the patronage of various governments.

Out of this condition come two bright lights that rivet our attention upon Cantor Bach's old home as the centre of influence. Our stream of development, which was a rivulet as it flowed from Flanders, soon became a mighty river, and has now overflowed its banks and formed a great sea of culture.

Mendelssohn was one of the most genial characters that we meet in the annals of music. His education and

temperament made the adequate adjustment of resources to the fulfilment of his schemes almost intuitive; but his conceptions themselves, although invariably round and poetic, usually lack the bold lines and the deep import that have distinguished the creations of our high-priests. Human characters, like forest-trees, seem to need exposure to trying winds, which if successfully weathered only strengthen their fibres and loosen the soil about their roots, so that they may spread out and extend downward to fresh and deeper sources of impulse. It may be that Mendelssohn's life conditions were too peaceful, that he was too much sheltered from care and adversity to fully develop the depth and nobility of his nature, which flashes out in some parts of "Saint Paul" and "Elijah," and pervades the "Walpurgis Night."

His happy disposition found its most

characteristic expression in inimitable scherzi and works of that less emotional class. Mendelssohn's elegance of style, richness of color, and his personality caused a wave of imitation to set across musical production, but it soon subsided, for only the most stalwart methods endure the dilution incident to their adoption by lesser talent without degenerating to insipid weakness. Mendelssohn's greatest service to the musical world was rendered in his persistent advocacy of Bach.

Schumann, our fifth high-priest, had to encounter the difficulties of life in the open field, having had no social nor financial breastworks from behind which he could ignore the "arrows of outrageous fortune." His path was strewn with thorns, and was unlighted by recognition until near its end. Schumann was not so consummate a master of counterpoint as was Mendelssohn, but

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SCHUMANN

his stronger individuality and deeper sensibility filled his fancies with epoch-making qualities. Our art had during the previous quarter century taken on more intensity, greater freedom in voice leading, and, last of all, a well-defined romantic vein.

The first two appealed strongly to Schumann's nature, as is evidenced by his writings, for the pictures of his imaginings are not peaceful pastoral scenes, but depict storms of passion and emotional struggles. Romance shows itself at times, but it is not a distinguishing element. Schumann wrote four symphonies, of which the last one heard is always the best. They rank among the few immortal works in this epic form, but entirely because of the individual character of their schemes and the richness of their musical texture, for their instrumental colors are not adequate. He succeeded equally well in ensemble,

chorus, and piano-forte music, and his songs almost rival those of Schubert, but strange to say, the orchestra seems to have been a closed book to our fifth high-priest.

Schumann had, in his impatience to overcome the weakness of his fourth or ring fingers, employed a mechanical appliance which permanently lamed his hands, thereby dashing his hopes of becoming a piano virtuoso. This is the only recorded case in which violent methods have produced desirable fruits; for they usually deaden the nerves only, and result in strength without facility, and tone without beauty; in other words, in wooden pianists. In this case they produced entire disability, and forced Schumann into his proper sphere,—creation,—in which he accomplished lasting good, whereas the benefits to art of even the highest grade of virtuosity are comparatively ephemeral.

His love for the piano-forte led him to study its capacities and limitations most thoroughly, the consequence being that his compositions for that instrument are more grateful to the fingers and ears of pianists than those of any other classical composer.

Schumann's music is more involved than Beethoven's or Schubert's, and his restless passion found expression in broken rhythms and in dissonant compounds, which, however they may at first impress us, gain natural and deep significance with close familiarity. He was the first composer to feel and apply the immense, expressive resources inherent in rhythm.

Schumann's quintet for strings and piano-forte is one of the greatest pieces of ensemble music that has been written, and his piano concerto in A minor is, to my mind, without a rival. Of his songs, the "Frauen Liebe und Leben" cyclus

are, when the numbers are considered singly, and then in their respective relations to his beautifully rounded conception of womanliness, the most remarkable, although the "Dichter Liebe" is full of gems, and the "Spring Night" is a picture which is more suggestive of a magic wand than of a human intellect.

Our fifth high-priest was not alone a musician; he was a philosopher and the ablest critic the musical world has seen. He was so broad that he could be generous as well as just, as was shown by his laudatory writings in regard to his rival,—Mendelssohn. He estimated Wagner's cruder stage correctly, and would doubtless have become an adherent of the new faith had he lived to see its riper fruits; for he was always susceptible to manifestations of genuine creative ability and logical reasoning.

The consideration of Wagner, the sixth in line, involves entering upon a

somewhat new field, and it will require so much space that I will give him, his forms, and his methods a separate chapter. Before undertaking that task it may be well to trace some of the tributary influences which, following collateral lines, have helped to swell the tide of musical culture. It will facilitate the accomplishment of this purpose to scan the achievements of each nation separately, mentioning only such individuals and events as were active agents in furthering the cause.

France evinced a very marked interest in music early in its second era, but her good intentions were several hundred years in crystallizing. The establishment of an Academy of Music in Paris (1672) was the first really noteworthy event in the history of French music. Tulli, who was its first director, was a very able man. He wrote operas, which were sung in French, and he

created the chrysalis from which our symphony was later developed.

Although the next hundred years were not productive of great men, Paris had at the end of that period become attractive and congenial to such masters as Gluck, Cherubini, and Piccini. This shows that she had educated a generation of intelligent listeners, and at least a portion of the executants necessary to the performance of grand opera.

In 1795 the Conservatory was founded, which event marked the beginning of that earnest, organized effort that has given the world so many rare instrumentalists and vocalists. The finesse of the French school is delicious when applied with intellectual breadth sufficient to prevent its becoming finical. France has also produced numberless composers, but few who have attained to more than passing fame. Her people are quick in their perceptions, and deft

and dainty in all that appertains to æsthetics. They are enthusiastic lovers of such music as does not require them to think earnestly while following it, but they are emotionally volatile.

Berlioz is the only French composer who successfully resisted the pressure of this environment. He was made of stern stuff, and followed the promptings of his muse without wavering, although she often dictated courses and methods that precluded immediate success with the public. In his Requiem Mass, which looks bizarre to a casual observer of the score, he uses each and all of the executive forces, an immense orchestra with all possible accessories, auxiliary brass corps, chorus, and *soli*, with such keen appreciation of individual quality and such unerring judgment as to the appropriate rôle for each quality in the grand ensemble, that the effects he attains not only disarm criticism, they fill one

with awe. Still, if we scrutinize Berlioz's works closely, we find that he was more a Rubens than a Rembrandt, for while his diction was often more erratic than sequential, his sense of tone color was so acute that it led him to inaugurate the movement that is still in progress for purging music of pernicious *unisons* reinforcements.

Of the other notable French composers, Gounod is delightfully melodious, but is too sweet to be entirely wholesome, and Saint-Saëns (half German in instinct and manner) is a phenomenal master of instrumentation, and he is very ingenious, but one is seldom convinced that his compositions have grown from emotional germs. Massenet, Bizet, and others have written, or are writing, charming music, but it has little substantiality. Its charms are liable to effervesce, like the emotions of the Paris public. The French seem to reserve

all of their earnestness for the more tangible arts, and for science, to all of which they have contributed their full share.

England's musical career has been unique. The people of that snug little island across the channel should be an enthusiastically happy race, for nature endowed their land with fertility and beauty, and centuries of skilful cultivation have enhanced these virtues until Albion's rural loveliness is to-day unequalled. They have exceptionally rich traditions, their prowess in arms and achievements in literature, science, pictorial art, and industry furnish abundant grounds for their national pride, but it is a pity that their blessings have not made them more demonstrative, for stoical complacency is not good soil in which to grow an emotional art. For this reason recorded English composition, which began so unprecedentedly well in the six-

teenth century with the invention of the madrigal, has not fulfilled the promise implied by that event.

The English are a sturdy race, and their climate and out-of-door amusements have endowed their voices with uncommonly mellow and tuneful qualities. It is therefore quite natural that their musical activities should have been so largely centred in chorus singing, which they make peculiarly sonorous and artistically adequate.

This choral virtuosity is not a recent growth, for it attracted Händel in the eighteenth century. It was also recognized by Mendelssohn. This love for song has been materially fostered by the Established Church, whose elaborate services have furnished composers with both incitement and outlet. Most of England's choral works are dignified and smooth, but they lack intensity.

There is an element in English (and

American) musical life the evil influence of which cannot be easily over-estimated: it is the popular ballad. In them the best lyric texts in any language are associated with musical conceptions which are usually so devoid of artistic qualities and significance, that no one at all musical would endure them were it not for the halo cast about their imbecility by the poet's art, which they profane.

The Scandinavian countries, and Russia, Poland, and Hungary, each with its distinctive folk-song treasury and romantic traditions, have, during this century, awakened to great musical activity, and each of them has produced one or more composers who have made an impression on art evolution.

The first named have given us Svendsen, Grieg, and Hamerik, not to mention the artistic but less stalwart Gade, with their weird and at times grotesque

rhythms, melodic contour, and harmonies. The sensation produced by these Scandinavian song characteristics when first brought to the notice of the outside world, impelled these talented men to incorporate them into their art. This was a mistake, for great music is as broad as the universe, whereas the vein of national song is narrow and only limitedly fruitful. Had Svendsen escaped infection from this northern piquancy, he might possibly have fitted himself to wear high-priestly robes, for his endowments were of the highest, and his début as a composer was startlingly brilliant.

Russia's musical type is less pronounced than the Scandinavian. Her producers have therefore developed on cosmopolitan lines. Tschaikowski, who was beyond compare the most gifted composer that Russia has given to the world, may with the passage of time be

recognized as the natural heir of our priestly line. His emotional power, clean-cut individuality (originality), fine sense of rhythmic values and color combinations, and his inexhaustible lyric invention place him at the head of symphonists of his time.

An event which reflected honor on the empire of the Czar was the birth within her borders of that giant of all pianists, Anton Rubenstein. I speak of him as a pianist rather than as a composer, for while he often showed the possession of uncommon creative faculties, he was too diffuse, seldom focussed his tonal diction to such coherent strength as would make his writings comparable with his playing.

Poland gave us Chopin, who is the one exception to the rules by which I have endeavored to trace the successive stages of musical evolution. All other composers have taken inherited forms

and means, and have moulded them into shapes comporting with the spirit of their individual conceptions, and even these conceptions were to a considerable extent reflections of their environment. Beethoven was a mighty genius, but he did not create an art type, and was therefore not, in a broad sense, original, whereas Chopin was radically so, his works seeming to owe no allegiance to schools, and seldom to nationality, but only to his poetic soul, of which they were the legitimate offspring.

His fancies are sometimes more graceful than strong; they even, now and then, verge on the sentimental; so Chopin is not entitled to a place among the giants, although he revolutionized composition for the piano, and wrote some things so beautiful that they excite ever fresh wonder. The small form seemed to best suit his spontaneous style; therefore op. 10 and op. 25, and the preludes,

undoubtedly better represent Chopin's individuality than do any other of his works.

Franz Liszt was born in Hungary, and in his less serious moments made use of the gypsy-like rhythms, twists, and spasmodic utterance of her national music. At other times he wrote universal music, which he made characteristic through breathing into it his own rich individuality. The Abbé Doctor was more fêted and less spoiled thereby than any successful artist of modern times. He led a life of triumph from youth to old age, and through it all preserved a simple modesty of manner, interest in new talents and accomplishments, and an indescribable intellectual fascination.

Nothing afforded Liszt more pleasure than to give advice to, or to use his influence for the benefit of, talent struggling to clarify its own conceptions, or seeking indispensable publicity. The

list of his protégés includes many who have made world records, like Raff, Bülow, Tausig, and Wagner. But for "Meister" Liszt's early perception of Wagner's then undeveloped genius, we should have had no sixth high-priest to record, and no Bayreuth festivals.

America has only recently entered the lists, for the conditions attendant upon a new civilization make artistic achievement impossible. These conditions were emphatically bad in our land, and they yielded reluctantly to art requirements. The religious bigotry of a large portion of those who first came to America, seeking freedom of conscience (for those who thought and believed as they thought and believed), was deadly to art impulse. They looked upon any music not set to sacred words as a frivolity that would imperil their souls, and they exercised little judgment in selecting such music as they did use. This narrow view of

our art greatly delayed the advent of musical intelligence, and it called a species of "psalm-smiters" into being, who, with inappropriate adaptations of secular melodies, and worse attempts at composition, debased both music and the services of the church, and sapped the vitality of art tendency when it first became manifest. America still harbors some of these vampires, but the day of art is breaking over our land, and these creatures of darkness will soon disappear.

Our progress was at first slow, but there have been no backward steps, and the past fifty years have witnessed a magical advance in general intelligence and in creative capacity.

Before closing this chapter I must return to Germany and trace some of the subsidiary sources of her present supremacy.

The name "Robert Franz," which

was years ago adopted by a timid young musician as his *nom de plume*, was formed by combining the first names of his ideal tone poets, Schumann and Schubert. His success was immediate, and he soon became so identified with this name that his own almost passed out of use. Robert Franz was a pure lyrist, and his songs must be given place little below those of his great models. He served to perpetuate the spirit of song, and placed the world under tribute by his Bach researches.

Raff was a man of startling routine, and of no less astounding inequalities in merit. Some of his symphonies are replete with sensuous melody and fresh harmonic, contrapuntal, and instrumental color, while others are incomprehensibly dull. "Leonora" and "Im Walde" represent Raff at his best, and they are so strong and beautiful that they will keep their creator's name before the

musical world for many years. No one can predict how long Raff's mastery of methods and forms will exert a salutary influence upon composers.

Schumann was Brahms's musical godfather, and he predicted great results from the development of his godson's talent. There is much difference of opinion as to whether Schumann's prophecy was fulfilled, but many capable critics are on the affirmative side. Brahms has, in one way at least, shown the possession of absolutely great qualities,—viz., his productivity did not exhaust, but increased the vitality of his conceptions. He was an artist with whom future generations will have to do, but he was not an epoch-maker.

CHAPTER V

WAGNER AND THE MUSIC DRAMA

IT is quite proper to devote a chapter to Richard Wagner, for his later works are not only examples of the most skilful and purposeful employment of the contrapuntal and instrumental resources which he, in common with his contemporaries, inherited from the past, but they show how audacious genius may safely pursue its purposes out beyond beaten paths into unexplored regions of tonal expression.

Why may genius do this, which is so uniformly fatal to the less gifted? It is because of its comprehensive grasp of logical sequence and its intuitive choice of adaptable means.

Ripe genius is a definite talent which

has been subjected to exhaustive discipline, which is familiar with traditions, and takes full cognizance of pedantic forms, but is guided by an art feeling engendered by this knowledge, and not by the knowledge itself.

It is a law unto itself. It conceives a picture, a poem, or a musical sentiment, and communicates it to us through means that are often as unfamiliar as is the effect of the whole original; for it usually avoids the ruts of travelled ways, its clear view of the objective goal enabling it to follow the less frequented stream-side or mountain-top paths.

Wagner was, in the last thirty years of his life, a ripe genius. He was the sixth of our musical high-priests, and he filled the art temple with a characteristic song incense which will pervade its atmosphere as long as human passions continue to furnish art impulse.

There is a class of pedants who still take satisfaction in calling Wagner's music artificial ; but these short-sighted critics cannot or will not properly survey the field of his activity and its fruits. No human mind could, unless impelled by natural, sequential feeling and virile imagination, write even one of his later dramas without manifold exhibitions of weakness in redundancies and lapses in significance. The fact that Wagner's works, from the "Meistersinger" on, show few, if any, such barren moments, adequately evidences their natural growth from musical germs.

A great creator always incites a large number of lesser lights to imitate his methods, but few of them do so successfully. Wagner is not, however, answerable for the vague effects of his dramatic means, when they are transplanted into Wagnerish overtures and symphonic poems. He evolved situa-

tions that made these means legitimate and significant; isolated, they fall into bizarre artificiality. Although we cannot fail to be influenced by the elements which Wagner added to tonal resources, they, like all other elements, must be applied because most adaptable to the development of the musical scheme in hand, and not because of their newness.

"A prophet is not without honor save in his own country." This was strikingly exemplified by the attitude of professional Leipzig towards Wagner during the earlier stages of his career. Leipzig was at that time regarded by the outlying world as the musical centre of the universe, a Mecca with a magic balm, dispensed by a priesthood whose Mahomet was Mendelssohn.

The town had been a prominent seat of learning since the first part of the fifteenth century, had possessed Bach as

cantor of its "St. Thomas' school," had for a long series of years maintained its "Gewandhaus" concerts, and was the greatest of all book- and music-selling marts.

These circumstances combined to make Leipzig stand out in bold relief on the world's map, but it required Mendelssohn's magnetism to make its attractions irresistible.

The Conservatory faculty of those days included all the most prominent musicians domiciled in Leipzig, for the town was too small to furnish adherents for such contra-minded parties or factions as exist in larger cities. Mendelssohn had enlisted his forces with well-directed regard for harmony, but their creed, although properly placing Bach as the corner-stone of musical faith, was too narrow in its tenets to admit those to communion whose fancy led them outside the pale of traditional

forms. They were even lukewarm towards Schumann, who had lived among them, had created a period,* and had contributed treasures to musical literature so luminous with genius that, as the mists of prejudice clear away, they will eclipse forever all contemporaneous productions in the various forms which they followed. The rugged boldness of originality was in the esteem of the Leipzig pedagogue but an exhibition of crude ignorance. Those who could not or would not recognize Schumann's

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* Composers who originate forms or methods that recommend themselves to the musical world because they voice recognizable advance in art expression, create periods. Mendelssohn was in his more earnest moods a modernized Bach. He did not originate forms, but adapted those of his great ideal to our nineteenth century habits of thought and feeling. He did this inimitably, but he was more finished than forceful or bold, and his impress on art was consequently not deep, although extremely salutary.

great throbbing heart in his writings, because he, in expressing his individuality, did not always follow prescribed formulæ, would naturally have rejected Wagner, for his earlier works were not cast in classic moulds.

Those of Wagner's creations which had been before the public previous to 1860 were characterized by few departures from Weber and Meyerbeer in scheme. Wagnerian harmonies were, however, too strong for the Leipzig critic, but the public flocked to hear them, and was pleased.

Original ideas often find first recognition among the non-professional, because musical leaders are so saturated with pedantry that sparks of genius cannot quickly kindle them to enthusiasm.

In 1862 the Gewandhaus directors made a great concession; they invited Richard Wagner to conduct his "Tann-

häuser Overture" at one of their concerts. This was a fatal mistake, for his triumph was complete, and their influence as opponents of the "music of the future" was correspondingly weakened. I have discussed Leipzig at such length, not because it was Wagner's birthplace, but because from this town, with all its intolerance and smallness, started the only short road to success. Leipzig's endorsement was a universally accepted voucher.

Wagner had found this direct path barred, and his wanderings in surmounting or circumventing obstacles lasted for a long series of years, but his faith remained steadfast, and he reached the goal of his ambition a far stronger man because of the difficulties he had overcome. His appearance at the Gewandhaus was only a station on his course to already assured success, and not his starting-point.

Wagner found opera a succession of solo, ensemble, and chorus pieces, strung upon plots often too slender to give them coherence.

Texts had been made subservient to music, and that, in turn, to the singer's convenience and ambition for display. Operas were written as early as the thirteenth century, but Cherubini was the first Italian, and Gluck the first German, to produce works that have survived. Cherubini was followed by Rossini, a man of genius, but too indolent to fully develop his gifts. Had his beautiful sensuous melodies been put into richer settings, had more earnest thought been added to his spontaneity, his operas would have taken their places among the undying creations.

Flashes of genius ultimately tire. It is the steady light of genius, fed by knowledge and earnestness (as in Beethoven, Schubert, and Schumann), that

can hold the world's attention restfully, which means perpetually.

Bellini, with "Norma" and "Somnambula," and Donizetti, with "Lucia di Lammermoor" and "Lucretia Borgia," still hold a place on the operatic stage, but their grasp is weakening. Verdi was the best equipped of all Italian opera composers, and his "Trovatore," with it rare gems, will crown his memory to the end of musical time. His later works, "Aida," "Othello," and "Falstaff," written under the influence of the Wagner period, are quite different from his earlier operas in instrumentation and in treatment of themes. In them he is more logical and stronger, but less sensuous. They furnish the first instances of Italian music dressed in foreign garb; of Italian music written under pressure from without. It has until recently been Italy's province to shed influence over the musical world.

I construe Verdi's concessions to Wagner as the strongest possible endorsement of the latter's ideas. No other composer was in position to pay such tribute to Wagner's forceful and far-reaching art sense.

The Italian composers of the new school are musical brigands, who for a brief space succeeded in taking tribute from the musical world. Their leader, Mascagni, made such a sensational raid with his "Cavalleria Rusticana" that young Italy jumped into the breach he made, and evidently thought to take possession of our temple, regardless of their lack of equipment and discipline. Although but few years have elapsed since this assault on art, its episodes have already been relegated to the realm of disturbing memories.

"Cavalleria Rusticana," the first and best of its class, has some merits; it is short, melodious, and dramatic, but

its melodies are often sentimental, and its dramatic points are usually made through the audacious employment of crude means. The direct influence of this work and its reception, conspired for harm to art.

Gluck was a Teuton, and although educated in Italy and adopted by France, can with propriety be called the father of German opera. His "Iphigenia in Tauris" and "Orpheus and Eurydice" will always be regarded as classic models of lyric writing. Gluck's schemes differed little from those of the Italian school, but his harmonic and instrumental methods were German.

Mozart was a phenomenal combination of inconsistencies. His routine and creative genius were of the highest order, his spontaneity and finish make his music delightful alike to amateurs and musicians, but he seldom seems to take matters seriously. "Don Juan,"

the "Requiem," and his string quartets are exceptions, for in these he is earnest and does his genius full justice.

Beethoven gave us "Fidelio." He was equally endowed with Mozart, but was actuated in what he did by earnest, deep feeling. "Fidelio," although built on the old and now discarded lines, will only take second place (musically) when some genius arises capable of writing symphonies to supersede Beethoven's nine. In "Fidelio" we still have the string of well-defined pieces, but they are rich in harmonization and polyphony.

Weber made a great impression on opera. His audacious use of the orchestra and of modulation, opened up new fields of possibility, and there is a doubt as to whether modern German opera would have become what it is, had Weber not lived. He was gifted with an inexhaustible store of melody, was equal to all dramatic situations, however exacting,

and could court popular favor without belittling his art,—a very rare quality. Weber was at first Wagner's model, and "Rienzi" and "Der Fliegende Holländer" bear a distinct Weber impress.

Meyerbeer was a German, but early adopted Italian methods. He was an excellent business man, possessed ample means, and therefore secured deserved recognition early in his career, instead of having lived almost a life of deferred hopes, as is usually the good musician's lot. Meyerbeer is melodious, and is often dramatic, but unlike Weber, sometimes belittles his art in catering to public tastes. His pageant and ballet music are the most characteristic and impressive features of his operas.

Wagner expressed contempt for Meyerbeer, but evidently recognized the grandeur of the operatic pageantry of which he was the creator. We see evidences of this phase of Meyerbeer's in-

fluence until we pass the "Lohengrin" stage.

Many other good operas were produced during the first half of this century, but as they were not potential factors in operatic evolution, I shall mention them only in passing.

Adam wrote "Postillion;" Auber, "Fra Diavolo," "Die Stumme von Portici," etc.; Flotow, "Martha" and "Alessandro Stradella;" Herold, "Zampa;" Kreutzer, "Nachtlager von Granada;" Lortzing, "Der Waffenschmied," "Der Czar und Zimmermann," etc; Marschner, "Hans Heiling," "Der Templer und die Jüdin," and "Der Vampyre;" Nicolai, "The Merry Wives;" Spohr, "Jessonda" and "Faust," and Schumann, "Genoveva." All of these operas are still given at least occasionally, and most of them are excellent musical compositions.

The situation at the time when Wag-

ner first manifested a defined tendency towards the music drama was as follows: Gluck had given the world his two great works, and they, together with "Fidelio," "Don Juan," "The Magic Flute," "The Marriage of Figaro," "Der Freischutz," and "Oberon" of the German, and "Trovatore," "William Tell," "Norma," "Lucia di Lammermoor," "La Somnambula," "Robert le Diable," "Der Prophet," and "Die Hugenotten" of the Italian, were the most prominent and best examples of operatic writing.

Although the first steps towards the emancipation of opera from inconsistencies were the result of conditions rather than of premeditation, Wagner had sufficient genius to appreciate the power inherent in logical sequence: a power which, when compared with that resulting from eccentric modes, is as the progress of the ages to that of a leaf borne by the wind. Logical sequence moves onward

with irresistible momentum, whereas fragmentary diction is blown about by every wind of caprice.

The condition which most influenced Wagner's conceptions was his relation as poet to his musical undertakings. He was in each instance first poet and then composer, and nothing could have been more natural than his early evinced disposition to guard his texts from distorted, disconnected renderings. This disposition grew, as through experience his grasp became more and more comprehensive. There were no backward steps in his career. It was like his schemes,—consequent,—advancing unwaveringly from inception to full realization in "Parsifal" and "Tristan und Isolde."

Wagner had courage adequate to sustain him in following his conceptions through ridicule, want, and almost utter friendlessness. No discourage-

ment could divert him from the even tenor of his chosen course. His early operas, although their texts were treated with unwonted respect, gave little intimation of the revolution which was to be accomplished by their author, and it is extremely doubtful whether Wagner at this period had a shadowy conception even of that later ideal, which time and experience developed, in which music and the pictorial element were not only to collaborate with, but were to reproduce the situations and sentiments of his poems.

This kind of tone painting, in which the composer endeavors to endow his musical phrases with definite significance, is justifiable and effective when they are so closely associated in performance with the motive text as to derive directness from its more tangible character. Such efforts must not be classed with so-called program music.

"Der Fliegende Holländer," "Rienzi," and "Tannhäuser" might have been produced through the co-operation of Wèber and Meyerbeer, with Wagner's individuality as a flavor. In them the voices are given melodies in clear-cut form, and they contain pompous Meyerbeerisms almost approaching the bizarre. This Wagner flavor, which consisted largely of a disregard of harmonic laws and key relationships, as dictated by the pedantic school, caught the public, but it aroused the violent opposition of older musicians. They denounced Wagner as a crazy ignoramus and his operas as abominations.

Viewed from a theoretical stand-point, there was that in Wagner's earlier works which in a measure justified his critics. He was not a good contrapuntist, and he consequently violated tenets of musical structure when conformity would have been more adequate.

The relations borne by plastic musical diction to the elementary rules of tonal science are so little understood, and a clear understanding of these relations is so important, that I feel justified in reiterating in different form what was said in a former chapter,—viz., that musical theory as a whole is but the codification of nature's adjustments. Extraordinary requirements license exceptional means and modes, but when composers abandon the letter of musical tenets and substitute therefor the higher law of compensation, they enter upon a field in which pitfalls abound, and through which nothing but keen judgment, founded upon experienced erudition, can safely guide them.

This law of compensation allows us to disregard elementary laws, when the nature of the situation in hand is such as to warrant and reconcile our musical sense to combinations or successions,

which would without this justification sound crude and faulty. The habit of what is called free writing is most pernicious, for compensation must legitimize each irregularity or we lapse into incoherency.

Wagner was a firm, but an equally thoughtful man, and while apparently undisturbed by the cyclone of criticism evoked by his compositions, saw his vulnerable points, and at once set about fortifying them. He studied counterpoint exhaustively, taking Bach as his model, and memorizing many of that master's most characteristic works. He then gave the world "Die Meistersinger" as the fruit of his labor, and therewith forever silenced honest cavillers who had based their adverse criticisms on his ignorance, for that work is a sublime example of contrapuntal virtuosity, and it marks the beginning of a new era in Wagner's development as a

musician. His orchestral settings having kept pace with his musical growth, had ripened, had become tempered, consequently "Die Meistersinger" is one of the most beautiful compositions of any time, and in it we have the clear announcement of the new dispensation.

There have been tons of literature printed, having as subjects "The Music of the Future," "Wagner," and "The Music-drama," some of the authors of which have been properly equipped (good musicians and liberally educated men), but more have been literary scavengers. The former class, having been on a war footing ever since Wagner became a bone of contention, are only just now beginning to discuss his creations dispassionately. Most of them were quite naturally arrayed against Wagner, for the most pungent flavor of the educated critic's writing is pedantry. He prefers traditions without originality

to originality which does not conform to traditions.

Wagner's first works almost paralyzed these gentlemen, and they were a long time forgetting and forgiving the shock. Their criticisms were terribly acrid, but, as I have before mentioned, were instrumental in creating the music-drama, inasmuch as through pointing out veritable faults and weaknesses they led Wagner to broaden his scholarship. These critics find it hard to lay down their arms, although the battle is over, and Wagner died in full possession of the field. The few who were from the outset in sympathy with Wagner were quite as intemperate in their laudations as were his opponents in their strictures. They were blind idolaters, and Wagner was their musical "golden calf."

The essence of the creed upon which the new dispensation is based is logical consistency. Poetry, music, and "stage

business" are by it required to co-operate in expressing sentiments and in carrying the threads of dramatic schemes. Each of these arts is entirely essential to Wagner's creations. His texts are statues, which music, stage-setting, and action imbue with life. For this reason no one can hope to follow Wagner intelligently who starts without having made himself conversant with his poems. His later texts are heroic epics of no mean order. Their adaptability and musical suggestiveness are phenomenal. They could have been produced only by a musician-poet who had his completed pictures in view while writing them.

They contain a vast amount of a species of word-painting,—viz., the use of words the very sounds of which are expressive. I remember well the hilarity caused among the anti-Wagnerites by the "Nibelungen" text, which was published some years before the operas

were performed. Satires and parodies were written; Wagner was described wooing his muse arrayed in fanciful vestments suiting the character of the subject under treatment. That was a happy time for his opponents. Opera texts that were not sentimental lyrics were incomprehensible. The "Call of the Walküre" was to them the climax of inanity; but those who have heard its musical setting will readily understand how its performance hushed these scoffers into respectful silence. I mention this "call" because most musical persons have heard it, and wondered at its adaptability.

Wagner bestowed the utmost care upon each and every task which he undertook; his effects are, therefore, less accidental than those of any other composer. He was in the habit of making three manuscripts,—viz., a sketch in which the outlines of form and charac-

ter were defined, then a score in which contrapuntal and instrumental material were developed, and, lastly, a manuscript in which, after ample weighing and filing, each detail of dynamic marking, etc., was not approximately but precisely indicated. A Wagnerian crescendo or decrescendo must begin and end with the notes and dynamic force prescribed by the master, or we miss the full realization of his pictures. In securing instrumental color he was liable to mark the various parts played together differently, ranging from forte to pianissimo, according to the combination and registers of the instruments employed.

Wagner left little or nothing to the conductor's discretion. Nevertheless, there are few who have the keen, delicate perception requisite to understanding his aims, and still fewer who have it in their power to so control their forces as to secure their fulfilment.

We will now look at some of Wagner's methods of musical treatment. In the first place, we find the Overture replaced by the Vorspiel (prelude or introduction). The former, in its independent completeness, complying more or less with the exactions of the sonate form, was quite in place when operas consisted of detached pieces; whereas the "Vorspiel," which is analogous to the dramatic prologue, is better adapted to the newer form. It is composed of, or at least it introduces, the pivotal themes of the drama which it precedes. In the prelude to "Parsifal," which begins with the *communion* theme, Wagner has accorded to it, and to the *grail* and *faith* motives, places of honor. They are, indeed, the foundation upon which the whole drama rests, and are the keys to its situations. We find the traditional closing form (Coda) conspicuous by absence, the prelude leading up to

and closing in the opening tones of the first act. This omission is grateful, for all careful musical listeners must have been disturbed time and again by the long-drawn, fanfare effects that custom has placed at the end of musical pieces. They are relics of barbarism to which even Beethoven's genius could not impart logical significance. The composer who, having finished the development of his themes, having said what he had to say, appends a closing form composed of either new material or of old inconsequently presented, sacrifices symmetry and vital force.

If custom required poets to attach Hallelujah-Hosanna verses to their finished poems, the result would not be intrinsically more incongruous than that produced by the average musical coda. A piece of music should end roundly, with a peroration, but this peroration must be adapted to the character and

length of that which has preceded it, must grow out of the themes from which the piece has been developed, and form an integral part of the whole. The oft-mentioned intangibility of our art seems to induce timidity among her devotees, and unfortunately this timidity is often greatest among those who are best fitted to introduce innovations.

We will next consider the vocal treatments of Wagner's texts. Following his course from the beginning, we find the singer's parts grow less and less melodic, but the listener, if not the singer, has more than adequate compensation for this loss of lyric quality in the dramatic power gained. Reverting to our simile of the statue, the stage setting and orchestra provide an atmosphere, and the singer breathes into the text the breath which launches it into life.

In his later dramas Wagner makes

the vocal parts purely musical declamation. He endeavors to, and usually succeeds in intensifying the elocutionary effects through changes of pitch and expressive rhythm, but gives the singer's convenience and voice limitations little attention. The singer's parts are, therefore, very difficult to learn and exhausting to sing, and they afford so little opportunity for display that only a love of art, strongly flavored with self-abnegation, could induce singers to attempt them.

My study of Wagner's works has greatly increased my respect for the intellects of Wagnerian singers. Any man or woman who can sing a leading part in one of the music-dramas acceptably, must have been endowed with strong throat and lungs, and must have acquired a faultless vocal method.

It is almost needless to say that the texts are set without any of those old-

time illogical repetitions in which composers indulged, in order that happy thoughts — good musical episodes — might be amplified. Wagner never lost sight of his central idea, and made everything bend to its fullest realization.

His orchestra does not accompany, in the common acceptation of that term, but sings into its many-voiced melody the sentiments and moods suggested by the text. The principal means used in the attainment of this end is the "Leit Motif." Its auxiliaries are the countless shades of harmonic and instrumental color which Wagner commanded.

These "Leit Motifs" (leading and characteristic themes) constituted Wagner's vocabulary. They expressed to him personalities, moods, or sentiments, as the case required, and they were consequently chosen to impersonate these in his schemes. They sometimes

consist of a few tones, and again of phrases. They appear in varied forms to suit changing conditions, but their impersonations are only made clearer through their elastic adaptability. These themes seldom appear in the vocal parts, but Wagner makes them, through adaptation and instrumentation, express each shade, from sunlight to storm, from love, trust, and worship, to wrath, fear, and hate, and in this way follows his text on parallel lines,—music by the side of and reinforcing poetry.

Wagner's demands on the stage-carpenter and scene-painter are so great that none but large theatres with ample means can properly realize his ideas of pictorial illustration. He possessed remarkable talent for inventing scenic effects, and disregarded cost.

Wagner originated the idea of having the stage overshoot the space allotted to the orchestra, the effect of which has

been good in most instances where applied. It has two advantages over the common placing,—viz., it brings the singer nearer his audience, which facilitates his task of making himself understood, and it has a grateful tendency to suppress obstreperous brass, who have a way, when placed in front of the stage, of making singers forgotten. I have seen singers struggle with tense muscles and swelling veins to make a vocal climax with no other result than an heroic spectacle.

When a conductor allows his brass to bury the more modest elements of his orchestra under their clangor, he shows incapacity,—either a lack of control or a coarse conception of their mission,—and as this incapacity is quite common, any mechanical device which will insure moderation on the part of our assertive friends who play the trumpets and trombones is worthy of commendation.

Now let us see what can be done towards putting ourselves still more closely in sympathy with the master, and to better prepare ourselves to follow his creations intelligently. Following intelligently does not imply merely the recognition of episodes of especial significance or beauty, but much more: it implies the loss of no contributive detail and an easy grasp of the combined means.

Exhaustive study alone can make this possible. Its importance must serve to excuse my reverting to the subject of texts. One should never take a book into an opera-house, but should make it superfluous through earnest and repeated readings at home. We should at least so familiarize ourselves with the text of works worthy of hearing, that we can anticipate situations and keep in touch with each and every detail of action and shade of meaning. This

having been accomplished, and having made ourselves acquainted with the more important Leit Motifs, we shall be intellectually equipped to follow the master in the development of his music-drama on the lines and through the methods we have considered.

I do not wish to claim that the most favorable conditions would enable us to fully understand intentions, or to discover all points of beauty and strength in one hearing; our study should, however, have placed us quite inside the cold curiosity line. We would be entitled to a creative sense akin to that felt by a co-worker: our natures would have been made acoustically receptive and responsive.

CHAPTER VI

WHAT ARE THE INFLUENCING FACTORS IN DECIDING MUSICAL DESTINIES? WHO IS TO BE OUR SEVENTH HIGH-PRIEST?

FOR reasons inherent both in music itself and in man's sluggish and prejudiced perceptions, really great composers have usually to wait longer for recognition than do those of mediocre capacities. Music that is worthy of consideration is as individual as its composer's features or his unconscious habits. It is a tonal utterance of his most intimate nature, an inarticulate but clear expression of his strongest emotions,—a shadow-picture of his very soul. The more intense the nature, the stronger the emotions; and the deeper the soul of the com-

poser, the less quickly can we apprehend the full import of his writings, for they are characteristic of him and foreign to us. Each period-maker adds so much to art resources and so materially modifies art methods, that he may be said to originate a musical dialect, with which our ears and minds have to become familiar before his poetic schemes can assume for us sustained and clear significance.

Because of this alien character of pronounced originality, high-priestly honors are usually posthumous, for they are bestowed only upon those who have convinced the musical world of their fitness through the life-long, patient, and intelligent use of supreme endowments. It is the musical world only that has the power to confer high-priestly honors, for that office is not at the disposal of composers' friends or adherents, nor of parties or clans. One must have gained

universal recognition as a beneficent and radically new factor in art in order to secure the requisite suffrages, and that requires so much time that but two of our six high-priests lived to realize the honor. Even Beethoven did not live to feel full assurance of immortality, but Wagner did. He knew that his innovations had been accepted by the world, that his achievements broadened the foundations of art and opened new channels for musical thought, that his individuality shone brightly across the broad sea of modern culture, a "beacon-light" of resplendent brightness, and that he was a period-maker, whose impress upon art was too deep to wear away, for he was a musician who abated not one jot or tittle of that which he thought was art's due.

This working throughout life for posthumous honors is not so depressing as it would seem at first glance, for any

man, however modest, if blessed with supreme endowments, must feel his power, and be buoyed up by the certainty of ultimate recognition. The art love, steadfastness, ambition, individuality, and imagination of truly great men are proof against the struggles and discouragements of the artist's existence.

Time is then our final tribunal, the only adjuster of musical values who makes no errors in judgment. The individual judge gauges the merits of contemporaneous composers, guided by his or her personal impressions. Time gathers composite impressions made upon races of music-lovers during decades, and her verdicts, based upon these impressions, are final. We are sometimes nonplussed, and even rebellious, when the success of our favorite composer, or of some especially sympathetic piece of music, proves ephemeral, but the fittest always survives, and the

fittest is the composer or work which, in addition to the indispensable technical and æsthetic qualities, is pervaded by the richest vein of altruistic individuality.

If time be our final tribunal, then professional critics are the advocates who present the claims of artists at the bar of her court. These advocates differ widely in ability and in character. A few of them have great learning, acute perceptions, and honesty ; they will advocate no cause that is prejudicial to the interests of art, our muse having, as it were, endowed them with a super-retainer. Such advocacy embodies the highest and best of which the limitations of individuality admit. From this ideal standard professional critics grade downward until they reach assertive, prejudiced, and sometimes malicious ignorance. In passing down the scale we first find capacity without the essential confidence in convictions (timid ability is

always a weak factor in adjusting affairs, whether artistic or material), then honesty and good-will unsupported by capacity, then capacity biassed by prejudice or self-interest, and last and worst, the pettifogger. These classes show arrogance, and attract attention (temporarily) in inverse ratio to their abilities. If we scan the history of our tribunal, we find that the more assertive the advocate the smaller his sphere of influence.

The great public is the jury in this court, and its decisions, although ultimately wise and just, are always so delayed by the babel of pleas that dins in its ears, that I feel justified in devoting a little space to these "moulders of opinion," and to facilitate my purpose will use a simile drawn from nature, which is less whimsical and more reliable than man.

Music is like a sensitive plant,—it

flourishes only when each and every condition is favorable to its growth. For this reason those who find pleasure, edification, and comfort in its subtle qualities should imitate the skilled gardener in his watchful and discriminating culture of flowers. A professional gardener is to horticulture what a critic should be to art. Each is supposed to bring trained faculties to his task, but the gardener, familiar with the principles that govern flower growth, studies the natures of his germs, and then adapts soil, temperature, etc., to the requirements of each. He thus starts out with one material advantage over his art *confrère*, in that his experience enables him to recognize the genera of his germs and to anticipate results. He deals with seeds, roots, slips, and bulbs; the art critic with the mysteries of individuality, of which he most often judges from the impressions made upon his susceptibilities by a mo-

mentary contact of its outward manifestations. These manifestations are seldom full and trustworthy indexes of creative capacity, especially in the cases of young composers, because of the unfavorable conditions that so often attend upon their development and presentation.

Communities are gardens in which music thrives, barely exists (the most common condition), or entirely fails to take root. Propagation is the crucial test of vitalizing qualities. A community that can produce new varieties, really audacious talents, must possess a high degree of fertility. The composers to be found living and creating in any given place are therefore reflections of their musical environment, for the faculties of musical organisms are more sensitive even than music itself. Transplanted music will continue to exist under conditions that afford no incitement to earn-

est creation, nor the elements from which virility may be drawn. Beethoven's works interest communities in which his faculties would have remained latent.

The legitimate functions of criticism are to seek out and to nurture true talent and to guide public discrimination in its initial judgment. Critics and reviewers are experts to whose expressed opinions the printing-press imparts degrees of convincing power not always comportable with their merit, and spreads them broadcast for good or ill. Printed criticism, because of this cogent quality, and because it appeals, and may repeatedly appeal,—being in fixed form,—to so broad a radius of intelligence, should be the most powerful as well as the most active agency in creating the conditions essential to musical growth ; but a careful review of the past and present relations of criticism to art culture would, to my mind, convince any unbiassed

thinker that the decisions of our court had been delayed and not facilitated by the average advocate, and that the productivity of our garden had never been increased by the ministrations of professional gardeners.

Nevertheless, printed criticism has a momentary influence. We do not necessarily surrender when confronted by criticisms at variance with our own ideas, but the undue weight with which printed matter is endowed often causes even expert opinion to waver, protest to the contrary as it may.

Printed news is not always authentic, nor are printed opinions on finance, political economy, sports, weather, etc., infallible, although usually written by specialists ; but these matters, being material, adjust themselves, and their editorial short-comings seldom do irreparable harm ; whereas our sensitive art, the elements of which are emotional, and

the supersensitive organisms which are blessed with art productivity, are less capable of recovering from the shock incident to misconception and misrepresentation.

Wagner was unique in this respect, for he endured years of calumny and injustice without flinching. His nature was dual, as if his art instinct had been grafted into an heroic character, like a noble oak, from which it drew vitality, and whose wide-spread roots imparted stability to its convictions without infusing into them any other suggestion of its stern elements. Were all talented composers as firmly rooted as Wagner, there would be less reason for protesting against ignorance and carelessness in print.

The second question propounded in the headlines of this chapter can be discreetly considered, but it can receive no conclusive answer until time's verdict is

rendered. We can weigh the impressions made upon our individual susceptibilities by the qualities of the more prominent candidates for high-priestly honors, and compare these with like individual conceptions of ideal attributes, but the result of our speculations must necessarily partake more of the character of a weather-vane, subject to the caprice of changing conditions, than of a finger-post, giving reliable direction to our anticipations.

Of all the composers of recent times, Brahms attracted the largest following of musicians, and with right, for the volume of his worthy creations is larger than that produced by any of his contemporaries. He wrote a vast number of songs, ensemble pieces for a great variety of instrumental combinations, accompanied and unaccompanied pianoforte pieces, and symphonies, overtures, etc., for the grand orchestra. His work

is usually characterized by rich harmonies, melodic voice-leading, transparent form, and a varying amount of spontaneity that at times fails to conceal evident effort. This effort makes itself felt in peculiar and even grotesque harmonic successions and rhythms, and it is traceable through all periods of his career. These, which to me are forced methods, are the only features that individualize Brahms's music. He is greatest when self-forgetful, and these unnatural features bespeak self-consciousness. Schumann, who was, as I said in a previous chapter, Brahms's musical godfather, was a genius with a clearly defined individuality, the complete and natural expression of which obliged him to invent means to supplement those that he had inherited from his predecessors. These invented means were peculiar harmonic compounds and erratic accents. Schumann usually employed

these devices with grateful results; for he makes us feel that they are essential to the development of full significance in his tonal schemes. Genius has a magical power over resources and modes, often transforming eccentricities into felicitous, expressive means, and endowing that which would be chaotic in other hands with logical import.

Brahms seems to have been dazzled by these extreme manifestations of his great prototype's individuality. He not only adopted, but exaggerated these, and made them the distinguishing features of his style. He was a masterly contrapuntist, had a clear sense of form, handled the orchestra well, although he never exhausted its resources, and was always a logical thinker. His skill in the treatment of themes was so astounding that he often imparted significance to trivial motives (*vide* the "Academic Overture" and his sets of variations), but

he was not a great initial inventor (an originator of pregnant themes) nor was he a resourceful colorist.

As I said before, Brahms was greatest when self-forgetful, for at such times the artificial element dropped out of his diction and he became a masterful musician, possessed of all the qualities but one that have characterized our priestly line. This missing quality is to my mind the most essential of all,—viz., a natural, distinguishing, and pervading individuality.

Tschaikowski received brief mention while we were considering Russia's services to art in the fourth chapter. Because of Russia's half-closed door her art has, until recent times, been very much isolated. For this reason Tschaikowski's claims have not even now been fully laid before our tribunal. It is a peculiar but characteristic circumstance that America anticipated Europe by several years in her knowledge and appre-

ciation of this great creator. America is constantly eager for novelty, and has not learned to seek it at home; Germany, and in a less degree the other European countries, feel complacency in their own achievements, and corresponding distrust and intolerance of foreign products.

It was but six years ago that Germany was made aware of the fact that a great genius had lived, created, and died outside of her sphere of direct influence, and almost without her knowledge. Tschaikowski had naturally been known in a way to well-read German musicians, but it required such a blow as was struck by Professor Leopold Auer to draw from our tocsin a peal sufficiently vibrant to penetrate to the farthermost confines of the musical world and to herald the coming of a new hero. Never was an act of justice and love more conscientiously and adequately accomplished.

Auer showed rare judgment in the selection of his programme. His evident desire was to display as many features of Tschaikowski's versatile genius as possible. He therefore chose the scholarly second, instead of the more assertively emotional sixth symphony. The violin concert, the "Nutcracker" suite, and the symphonic poem "Francesca da Rimini" followed. I know of no other composer of any time whose works could furnish an equal variety of defined moods, each bearing the unmistakable stamp of his individuality.

Professor Auer conducted the orchestral works and played the concerto with a skill which drew its inspiration from the reverent memory of his lost friend. His exaltation infected the orchestral players, and finally the audience, making the evening memorable, and sending out waves of enthusiasm that have carried Tschaikowski's name and music

to the remotest corners of the musical world.

In my previous mention of Tschaikowski I accorded him virtues that "place him at the head of symphonists of his time." He had, however, two frailties, one of which more or less pervades his works, while the other shows itself but seldom. The former is a too great fealty to his themes as at first announced, and the latter is an occasional tendency to be melodramatic. Plastic compositions must be true to the spirit, but not to the initial form of their themes, for pregnant themes possess many phases of suggestiveness, and the more of these phases a composer feels and displays, the richer the homogeneity of his creations.

Were it not for these slight weaknesses in Tschaikowski's work I should not hesitate to predict that time would make him her choice for our seventh

high-priest, and he may win the honor in spite of them, for his great qualities are overpowering.

There are no known candidates who are worthy of comparison with these two giants, Brahms and Tschaikowski, one mechanically and the other emotionally musical.

CHAPTER VII

A SUMMARY OF MUSIC'S ATTRIBUTES. WHAT CONSTITUTES MUSICAL INTELLIGENCE?

ALTHOUGH some of the attributes of our art have received repeated mention in previous chapters, I feel that a short summary of their distinguishing qualities might serve to throw the outlines of my sketch into clearer relief. I shall seek this background without resorting to technical analysis.

Before undertaking this task I should like to emphasize the oft-announced fact that music is a thing apart. It, like language and the other arts, follows lines that lead from individuality to outside intelligence. In the case of music,

these lines start in the innermost recess of the composer's emotional nature, and connecting with lines that lead through our intellects into the equally secret chambers of our natures, bring to us sentiments intelligible, but too intimate to endure analysis.

Civilized nations have long associated rhythms and moods,—*i.e.*, a marked four-quarter measure has always been characteristic of the march, etc., but rhythm, although it is music's heart-pulsation, is only the metre for musical thought.

Scientists teach us that certain sounds are adapted to conjunctive use as chords because of the mathematical relation existing between the vibrations, of which they are the audible results. They go on from this beginning through the gamut of musical learning, and close without having given us a key to interpretation; so music is, and must remain, an untranslatable language of the

soul, producing effects and inducing emotions, using the intellect as a medium only.

Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "Music which is translatable is necessarily of a low order." This sentiment is true, and it voices a fine sense of music's nature and limitations, remarkable in a layman, for there exists a disposition to pull the creations of the great masters down to earth, and to make them tell tales of earthly experiences.

Music's purity, strength, and beauty are always sacrificed through attempts to materialize it, for great music results from the natural development and the felicitous expression of characteristic musical thought, and not in the ingenious tonal illustrations of scenes or sentiments, which have been, or might better be, expressed in words, because of their material character.

Pure, complete conceptions cannot take form in other than sensitive natures; sensitive to the influences of life's surroundings, receiving impressions from the bird's song, the flower's perfume, the storm's might, the mountain's grandeur, the rippling stream, the peaceful valley, and filled, at least for the time, with love for God and man; nor could such conceptions pass to expression through intellects that had not been tempered, refined, and broadened to grasp all the resources that tonal science offers.

It is in artificial music only,—born of purpose and not of inspiration,—or in the work of unripe musicians, that science obtrudes itself. In other words, when the means are noticeable, they have either been unskilfully employed, or the composer has been actuated by the ambition to display scholarly qualities regardless of æsthetic considerations.

How often we hear works in which any possible sparks of sensibility and spontaneity have been smothered beneath loads of counterpoint and thematic development, which are devoid of significance because not evolved in logical sequence! Drawing and anatomy are to painting and sculpture, and grammar, rhetoric, and metre are to poetry, what musical science is to musical art, inasmuch as in each the capacity to produce, or to appreciate what others have produced, is largely proportioned to one's knowledge of these structural laws.

Temperament, natural endowments, culture, and habit play such important rôles in creating individual conceptions of beauty that we can only consider as our criterion the judgment of people existing in our own environment.

The first essential of beauty is symmetry. A rose cannot be beautiful unless gracefully formed and poised. The

Creator's hand may have tinted it incomparably, may have distilled the daintiest fragrance for its portion, but these will avail naught if it has inherited ungraceful proportions, or if the world has distorted it during its period of growth.

As the rose requires color and perfume to perfect its charms, so each animate and inanimate creation in this world requires its suitable accessories to symmetry.

According to our standard, woman should have a lithe, plastic form, with fluctuating color and an all-pervading fragrance of intellectual modesty; whereas man should have a sinewy form, bold and strong, the color of perfect health, and the fragrance of intellectual fearlessness. Each must possess clearly defined individuality.

God's creations are never exact duplicates, and still we have numerous beautiful roses and women and Apollo-

like men, each with appropriate attributes, and each satisfying the æsthetic taste of some one person or class of persons, because of the affinity to that object of the personal ideal which was implanted in this person or these persons by God, and which has been nurtured by conditions of life.

As in everything else that lays claim to beauty, so in music, symmetry must underlie all other attributes. The laws regulating musical symmetry are so rigid, when viewed from one stand-point, and are so elastic when viewed from another and higher, that it is not at all strange that young composers stand aghast when they reach the neutral point of receptivity from which these apparently contradictory conditions first manifest themselves. But these conditions are not really contradictory, for prescribed form is but a properly proportioned and adjusted skeleton, an out-

lining framework, subject to such modifications as will adapt it to the character of our schemes. These modifications must not, however, involve the use of eccentric lines, or the omission of essential members of the body musical, for such action would result in malformations.

The composer, having articulated his form, clothes it in such melodic and harmonic material, moulded into such shape, as will realize his fancy's ideal. The outcome of exhaustive knowledge, directed with justifiable freedom, is musical symmetry.

The next attribute is, as in the case of the rose, color; which in music is more or less attractive according to the richness of the material applied and the artistic skill and care bestowed upon its arrangement.

There are several sources to which the tone painter may resort for what

might be termed primary colors,—viz., the human voice, the characteristic qualities of instruments, harmonic compounds, and rhythm, the combining and blending of these primary colors so as to produce the most effective shade for each episode, not only when considered by itself, but also in its relations to the whole panoramic succession of the finished picture, is the problem that so few solve. Most composers seem to feel quite satisfied if they succeed in startling us with uncommon combinations, however crude and irrelevant.

Next comes sentiment, which is to music what fragrance is to the rose, and what intellectuality is to woman. All three would be hollow mockeries without this parallel endowment. A piece of music must express a human desire, a belief, or an emotion, otherwise it is but empty sound.

These three attributes—symmetry,

color, and sentiment—are at the command of all talented musicians, but the all-pervading individuality that so adjusts form, so arranges color, and gives such adequate expression to each shade of feeling as to create natural but unique tone pictures, is possessed by few composers of any given generation.

So-called original music may be nothing more than the fruit of good taste displayed in the arrangement of laboriously sought peculiarities of means and modes, and it is therefore only outwardly individual; but music whose themes spring from a pronounced individual feeling, which feeling moulds its form and makes each contributive detail conform to the spirit of the initial impulse, is truly original. Individual music is then radically original, but original music is not necessarily individual.

A spark of individual genius, because of its clean brilliancy, sends out its rays

into illimitable space; whereas a whole bonfire of purposeful eccentricities curtains its flames with non-radiating elements, illuminating but a small field.

Now we must step backward beyond that point where science begins to shed her light upon natural laws. What agency produces life, starts and keeps in motion the machinery of our bodies, and places a soul behind our features? The same agency must guide us in the conception of musical ideas, or they will lack all living elements. This power is God: God in us,—a well-spring of inspiration for those whose susceptibilities are sufficiently acute to feel its influence.

Science can teach us to produce rich harmonic successions and instrumental colors, but it cannot impart the magical power of spontaneous and sequential growth that characterizes great compositions, nor can it show us how to identify

the spirit which pervades such works. Any one can prepare himself to weigh the intellectual properties of a musical work, but the spirit which these properties are supposed to clothe will not materialize for unsympathetic souls. Herein exists the reason for differences of opinion entertained by cultured and honest critics.

Some works possessing all the attributes of greatness must be often heard before they begin to enlist our sympathies. Others, equally inspired, fail to awaken responsiveness in certain persons. Differently constituted natures cannot be expected to vibrate in unison, and as real music is soul vibration made audible, it seeks responsiveness in our natures, as any given tone lays hold of objects whose vibrations are sympathetic, causing them to emit consonant sounds.

The impression made by music can

only be similar even—in character and intensity—where the hearers are equally endowed and cultured, and are equally conditioned mentally to surrender themselves to its influence. As long as each member of the human family is distinguished by individuality, so long will the impressions made by the intangible elements in art be diverse.

Suggestiveness is the highest quality with which a poet, an orator, a painter, a sculptor, or a musician can endow his productions. Its existence implies a clear conception, rooted in sentiment and adequately expressed through adaptable means, but well within the line of demarcation which separates logical terseness from redundancy.

Who can listen to Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, or Wagner and not find himself in a dreamland, peopled not so much by children of the great master's brain, as by the offspring of his own

fancy? These results are the fruits of suggestiveness.

Routine often leads to diffuseness; the lack of it always results in illogical and inadequate expression; but routine directed by genius seldom fails to discover the vital line which marks the boundary of completeness. On one side of this line we have inland waters, flowing from the author's fancy: on the other, and fed therefrom, the open sea of semi-conscious cerebration, with its capricious winds and tidal currents.

If a writer succeed in enlisting our sympathies, the flow of his thoughts will impart the impetus requisite to carry us beyond this line; but here his direct influence ceases, for the stream of his fancies becomes merged in the ocean of each of our lives' memories, hopes, and experiences, and each having received an impulse comporting with his receptivity and habits of mind, sails away

upon his course propelled by unfettered imagination.

MUSICAL INTELLIGENCE.

A symphony is like an epic poem ; its salient points rather than its rounded whole appeal to the average reader or listener. The striking episodes of unfamiliar compositions in large form, are prone to come out into undue prominence, and so blind us to their true significance as phases of sequential development. The sustained effort, and experience demanded by a symphony, are the supreme tests of a composer. We therefore have no right to an opinion in regard to the merits or demerits of a large earnest work until study and hearing have, in our understanding, joined its episodes and given them importful continuity.

Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, and Wagner were endowed with great talent,

which indefatigable energy advanced to genius. They worked upon a plane far above other men. We cannot hope to feel what they felt while creating, but we can work, the while knowing that as we approach their level in knowledge and experience our minds will better assist our understanding of their conceptions. Their joys, their sorrows, their triumphs, their every sentiment should find response in our hearts; but the impression made by music can only be distinct after we have made ourselves acoustically receptive, after our natures have become attuned like æolian harps to responsiveness when waves of melody strike upon them.

Our minds can be sounding-boards, which gather and reflect upon our souls the tone pictures we hear. A wooden surface must be smooth, properly formed, and perfectly poised, or it will not collect, focus, and reflect sound

effects. In the same way our mental sounding-boards must be properly prepared, or they will not collect details and reflect sentiments. This preparation involves the use of all available means for shaping, refining, and poising. The earnest study of any branch of learning broadens, and the contemplation of the beautiful in nature and art quickens, the perceptions.

Pedantry—another name for self-sufficient ignorance—will warp and so distort our reflector as to mar its efficiency, making it unjust alike to the subject and to us.

The ear should be capable of transmitting correctly, and if possible in detail. Some persons are endowed with absolute pitch. These fortunates, if they persist in careful listening, can become able to follow an intricate composition, in its modulations, thematic development, etc., more easily, as well as

more accurately, through hearing than through reading the printed page. This ability marks a long stride towards sympathy with the composer, especially as its exercise involves undivided attention to the subject in hand.

The absence of absolute pitch is no indication of lack of talent, and those who cannot acquire it have no reason for discouragement. Every ordinarily gifted student can educate his hearing to recognize intervals (seconds, thirds, etc.) and the tendency of chords, as based on the relations existing between the tones of which they are composed—to each other and to the key.

We should strive to make ourselves good mediums. Refined creations cannot appeal to crude natures. The savage, although sometimes possessing poetic instincts, prefers his own music, with its monotonous weirdness, to that which more civilized communities can

offer. Our right to pass judgment upon others' creations will therefore depend largely on the distance we are removed from the savage in the process of evolution.

THE END

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